MURDER ON THE PALISADES

WILL LEVINREW

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By

Will Levinrew

William Levinrew

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FOREWORD

HAVING two idle hours on my hands, I went into a billiard room formerly on the southwest corner of Broadway and Fiftieth Street, New York, where I played billiards with an old man of seventy-six. The final score was: Old Man, 250; Myself, 63.

The wound to my vanity was considerably soothed when I learned that there is not an amateur in the world who can beat this old man. His name is Maurice Daly; he won the world championship in 1873. He complains that his eyes are not as good as they used to be.

My interest was aroused. I began to recall the names of the old men of whom I had heard or read, who, at such a ripe age, could coördinate mind and muscle to the extent that Mr. Daly did.

I discussed the matter with my friend James Hale, who is now an important executive in a radio company. It was Hale who furnished me the material for "The Poison Plague."

Hale was a newspaperman for twelve years and he is a mine of information.

When I mentioned the Daly incident, Hale did not react at all with the enthusiasm I had hoped to evoke. He said:

"Rather unusual, of course, but not startling. The top notch professionals can beat him. It is true there are only about ten men in the world who can do it, but there *are* ten.

"Professor Herman Brierly is much more remarkable than that. He, at the same age as Maurice Daly, has not his superior in the world. What is still more remarkable than that is that this applies to a great many lines of human endeavor. Many scientists have said of him that he 'specializes in almost every exact science.' This is literally true of Herman Brierly.

"Aside from his vast store of knowledge, he can and does correlate, coördinate and apply what he knows to whatever problem he happens to have at hand.

"Professor Brierly has a passion for pure thought. He is impatient with the common brand of ignorance and the ordinary man's loose methods of talking and thinking. A great

many specialists have consulted him on matters pertaining to their own chosen specialty, with profit to themselves.

"He used to hate newspapers," continued Hale with a grin. "And he still does, and newspapermen, principally for their inaccuracy in handling scientific matters and the fact that they give only such little space to matters that to him are of such vital importance.

"It was a tough job to induce him to leave his experiments for a while to solve that ghost mystery that gave the police so much trouble. Later came the poison plague which you described in your story. Since then I have, through his assistant, John Matthews, who was a classmate of mine, got his interest engaged in a number of police matters.

"Did you keep a record of all that, Jimmy?" I asked.

"Yes, I did. I was going to be a writing man you know, but this firm convinced me that I could be just as happy and make more money, if I employed my literary gifts at advertising copy."

"May I use your material?" I asked eagerly.

"Sure, W. L., help yourself." Jimmy

brought out a sheaf of notebooks and scraps of copy paper. The following is one of the stories I found recorded among those notes with a fair degree of accuracy, sufficient, at any rate, for my purpose.

MURDER
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CHAPTER I

THE maw of "Iron Man" Hite's large waste-basket was receiving its daily contribution. The truly remarkable thing about the daily mass of the city editor's rejected material was the similarity of one day's grist to that of every other day. Anonymous communications; long rambling two-column accounts of unimportant events, social and otherwise; the perennial, ever-present product of the persistent publicity man. These ran from the theft of the thirty-a-week chorine's $250,000 in gems, to the high curative and therapeutic value of the most recent find in shoe leather.

Hite's right hand was hovering over the basket with a slip of paper, while his left hand was reaching toward the pile of mail on his desk, when something—something that he described to himself later as a hunch—caused him to stop and scan again the slip of paper he was about to throw away.

"Hey, Mac, look at this!" He pushed the note across the desk to his assistant. The latter

looked at it, read it, read it again and then looked inquiringly at his chief. "Well, what about it?"

"What do you make of it?"

Mac shrugged, shook his head and passed the note back. Hite picked it up once more and look at it frowningly, half annoyed with himself for paying any attention to an anonymous communication.

The note was a plain, unruled sheet of cheap paper, evidently torn from a notebook. It bore the following message, without salutation or signature.

> Conrad Manx, Jr., will die of meningitis.
> He will be number 8.

Aside from the strangeness of the communication itself, it had a physical peculiarity that arrested Hite's attention. The message was made up of individual letters of unequal size that had evidently been cut from either headlines or advertisements of a newspaper, and pasted on the sheet. This gave the message an uneven, erratic appearance.

"What's that character on the bottom, Mac, do you know?"

Again Mac shrugged his shoulders.

Hite turned toward the busy, noisy room and yelled:

"Hey, which of you guys knows Tibetan, or Sanskrit, or Hebrew, or Chinese, or something?"

A voice answered, "Bacon, here, knows languages, including English and American and maybe the Scandihuvian."

"Bacon, what's that character on the bottom of the message?"

"That's the Hebrew ALEF, corresponding to the Roman A."

"What does the writer mean by number ALEF?"

"That's the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is also used to designate the numeral 1."

"Give it back here," Hite growled.

His annoyance with himself was increasing for giving any time or attention at all to an anonymous message. He was violating an almost inviolable rule of his with reference to that kind of message. Unsigned communications always found their way into the wastebasket without further thought. But this one intrigued him. He could not ascribe it to his

"nose for news," the newspaperman's sixth sense. He admitted to himself regretfully that it was pure hunch. His annoyance mounted when he saw that the envelope, showing a local postmark, was addressed in the same manner—with single letters pasted side by side to make the address. Holding the envelope and note uncertainly above the wastebasket, he, with sudden resolution, tucked both into a pigeonhole and went at his daily morning grind.

Three hours later, all the assignments having been apportioned and his desk cleared, he took the note from its pigeonhole and once more studied its unusual characteristics. Because it was late Monday morning, when real news was scarce and many men on his staff were largely idle, he came to a sudden decision and called James Hale to his side.

"Hey, Jimmy," handing him the note, "ramble around and see what you can find on this."

Jimmy looked at the note and expostulated vehemently.

"Aw, chief. An anonymous communication!"

Hite looked at him and his beetling eyebrows twitched aggressively.

"Too bad, Jimmy. I know that the Yanks and the Senators are playing a crucial game in a crucial series and I appreciate your commendable desire to see Ruth slam one into the right field bleachers, but this paper isn't paying you to see baseball games. We have an expensive sporting department for that. I want that story if there *is* a story. And may I remind you before you start that this is a daily paper we're runnin' and not a quarterly periodical." This was one of Hite's familiar formulas.

Jimmy's look of shocked, virtuous innocence was a triumph in histrionic art.

"Why, chief, baseball game, I wouldn't dream—"

"Oh, yeah, of course not. I know you wouldn't, not on a work day. Awful of me to think it. Doing you a terrible injustice, I know. But run along now or I'll drop you out of the window."

At the door, Jimmy, who was looking at the slip of paper with interest, his resentment now absorbed in the deeper absorption of the good newspaper man in a promising story, stopped and turned back.

"Say, chief, know who this bird is?"—pointing to the name on the message.

Hite looked and shook his head slowly, doubtfully. "Can't say I do. Name is familiar, though. Wait a minute. Isn't Conrad Manx the fellow who was decorated by Congress for distinguished valor, wounded in the head, and nearly died?"

Jimmy nodded, his resentment now completely forgotten.

"Say, chief, there may be something in this after all. I'm on my way. S'long."

Since Professor Brierly's happy solution of the Poison Plague that had caused such widespread misery and distress about a year before, Jimmy had kept closer than ever to his old schoolmate, John Matthews, Professor Brierly's assistant. It was natural, therefore, that at a time like this that ill-assorted pair should enter his mind.

The perfunctory greeting of the two old friends hid from the casual observer the deep underlying affection and respect that bound them.

" 'Lo, Jimmy, old horse. Want me to solve

any more mysteries, or did you come to invite me to lunch?"

"Came to do both. What do you make of this?" He handed the sheet of paper to the young scientist. After scrutinizing the message closely, Matthews pointed to the character at the end of the message and asked, "What's this?"

"That's a er-er—that's the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet and stands for the A. Our philological shark in the office says it is also used for the numeral one."

"Well, what's it all about, what can I do about it?"

"In the first place, what is meningitis?"

"Oh, that?" Matthews answered with a grave face. "It's an inflammation of the meninges, the meningeal membrane."

"Is that so! Now don't be so damn smart and technical. Tell me in plain, unadorned, simple English just what it means."

"Oh, 'scuse me. I forgot that to your ignorant lay mind such simple words and phrases don't mean anything. I also forgot that all the newspaperman needs to know is how to spell the word 'alleged' and a lot of adjectives.

Well, generally, meninges means a covering sheath. Specifically, in Anatomy, it means the sheath covering the brain and sometimes the spinal cord. The inflammation of this sheath is meningitis and it often proves fatal. Now that you know this, what are you going to do with it?"

"I nosed around a little—"

"Nosed around is right," murmured Matthews.

"If you weren't as big as an elephant," said Jimmy regretfully, balling his fist. "Anyhow, I made inquiries before I came here and I find that Conrad Manx, Jr., is in first-class health. Could you forecast that a person would die of meningitis?"

"Why, I sure could. I could also foretell which one of your hundred to one parlays would click. I could foretell just what the weather will be on the afternoon of March twenty-seventh, twenty-one-thirty-eight. I can foretell the exact shade and size of the mole on your future wife's left eyebrow. I can also foretell that if you keep on bothering me with such questions, you are going out on your ear. Now, what the devil are you—"

"No, seriously, Jack," Jimmy interrupted his friend's tirade, "what I mean is, if someone had designs on a person's life, could he induce meningitis, in the same way, say, that he could inoculate one with an infectious disease?"

"I doubt it very much, Jimmy. Not in a big healthy adult. Still, that's merely my opinion. If you want the last word on the matter, you better ask his nibs there." His thumb pointed toward an inner room, which housed Professor Brierly and his experiments.

"No, thanks," said Jimmy hastily. He had a quick vision of the irascible old man being disturbed during an important experiment to be bothered with what to him would be a "trivial, trifling, idle question." He had experienced that kind of thing before and he did not feel that the present instance warranted the risk of one of the old man's fiery explosions of wrath. "I'll take your word for it, Jack. See you again. Oh, by the way, I promised you lunch. Come along."

"Can't now, Jimmy. Got some work to do. Some other time."

Followed three hours of exhaustive probing and searching, during which Jimmy acquired a

lot of information but, as he himself put it, "no story." When he was crossing 163rd Street, headed downtown, his mind wandered wistfully eastward toward the Yankee Stadium, where he knew the game to be under way. When the subway train came to 116th Street, he resolved suddenly to interrupt his trip downtown by a stop at Columbia University. This was largely because Jimmy was a conscientious reporter, once he was on a story. He did this in a last desperate hope that he could carry back to the office at least some small evidence that he had been on the job.

Arrived at that institution, he was shown the way to the Philological Department and was fortunate enough to find an authority on Hebrew.

"What is this character, doctor?"

"Well, it will pass for an ALEF," smiled the bespectacled young-old man, peering at the anonymous note.

"What do you mean, 'it will pass for an ALEF'? Isn't it an ALEF?"

"Well, if you took the simple Roman A and printed it so that the thin portions of the letter were thinner; the heavy, shaded portions more

heavily shaded; the angles greater, and if you added a few flourishes, you would have an A of course. In just that way is this an ALEF. What made me smile is that it is so long since I have seen the letter made just that way. I am trying to remember just where and when I saw it. I seem to recall something odd in connection with this letter. Oh, I see—" He was now holding the sheet of notepaper parallel with his eyes and was gazing intently at it.

"What is it?" urged Jimmy, his newspaper sense aroused.

The scholar was still staring closely at the sheet. Then he turned it over and looked at the reverse side.

"Why, don't you see?" asked Dr. Moyer. "This letter is a tracing. Hold it parallel to your eyes and you'll see it. Then turn it over and you will see the deeper indentation made by the tracing. Very carefully traced, too. I am still trying to remember something strange in connection with the source of this particular ALEF. But never mind, I daresay it is unimportant.

"Did you say you were a newspaper man? Ah, and you are seeking a 'story,' as you call it.

Well," smiling mischievously, "you are trying to trace the writer of this note; you should not have much difficulty. The source from which this ALEF was traced is undoubtedly out of print. If, among the hundred odd millions of persons in this country you find the possessor of the book, pamphlet, brochure, or other source from which this character was traced, there is at least an excellent chance that he is the writer of this note."

"You may be right," assented Jimmy. "Will you try to remember where you saw this odd ALEF?"

"Oh, indeed I shall. I should like to remember for my own sake. There is something odd in connection with this that I should like to recall. Unimportant, perhaps, but odd, nevertheless."

Jimmy left Dr. Moyer and soliloquized.

"Yeah, fine clue. Language shark half remembers something about a book or something that he doesn't remember at all. And if I find what he doesn't remember, I'll have something. Easy, cinch!"

Arrived at the office, he went to the copy desk and told Bacon what the man at the uni-

versity had said about the Hebrew letter. Bacon agreed with this after another look at the note, but he did not know much about it, did not care, and begged Jimmy not to bother him. Jimmy went along to report to Hite.

"I've got all the dope, chief, but there's no story."

"What's the dope?"

"This Conrad Manx, Jr., the chap this note is about, is the oldest son of Dr. Manx, big consulting physician. Conrad was in the war and got so badly wounded they thought he would die. Had his skull smashed and it was a tough job to bring him around, but so far as I could learn, he is in pretty good health now.

"Dr. Manx is practically retired, although he still goes out occasionally for consultations. His present wife is his second wife; I picked up some scandal in connection with his second marriage. His present wife had been married before. Dr. Manx was the family physician for her folks before she was married the first time, and later Dr. Manx's first wife died, in childbirth. Dead about five years when the second Mrs. Manx's husband died. The only ground for the scandal I could dig up was that

the present Mrs. Manx and Dr. Manx showed unseemly haste in getting married after her first husband died. She is considerably younger than he. She had no children by her first marriage, but there was a boy born to her about six years ago.

"Shortly after she gave birth to this child, she suffered an attack of something that left her completely paralyzed from the hips down. She gets about in a wheel chair. Dr. Manx's first wife died about twelve years ago. There are two daughters, the older one married to a David Mooney. The Mooneys, with their year-old son, are living at the home of Dr. Manx. Mooney, I understand, doesn't do much of anything. Dabbles in an amateur way in some of the doctor's research work, which the old man is carrying on rather extensively, now that he has retired from active practice. David is interested in a lot of things—real estate, brokerage, theatrical agencies—all in an amateur way.

"The younger daughter is about nineteen, at Vassar. There is the twelve-year-old boy Harry, whose birth caused his mother's death. There is the six-year-old Frank, half-brother to

the others; and last but not least, comes Robert.

"All the neighbors have a great deal to say about Robert. I guess this is pretty much because Robert never seemed to take to the neighbors. He didn't like them and took no pains to hide it. He is about twenty-two or three and considered a sort of black sheep. He quarreled with every member of the family, particularly with his father about the stepmother, and he was away for a long time. He was practically forced to leave home, but came back recently. The quarrel was not the usual thing in such a case, about his not being friendly enough to his stepmother. No; it seems that he was the only member of the family who has been rather friendly with her of late. At any rate, he seems to be a quarrelsome chap, with a disposition about as sweet as old vinegar.

"There are also some stories about the doctor's amorous affairs with patients, and so forth, but no more than is said of almost any physician, or of most any man, for that matter.

"Then there is a housekeeper, an old Swedish amazon; been in the family since the old man married. Was originally the maid and the only maid. There is a chauffeur, a maid with a

French name, a rather sprightly dame, the neighbors say; a gardener, and a woman who comes in three or four times a week—laundress, I guess. The laundress is the only one who does not sleep on the premises. The house is queer and it is in a queer place. Know where Dyckman Street ferry is?"

Hite nodded.

"Well, on the Jersey side of the ferry, halfway up the road leading to Englewood Cliffs, there is a new road going north on a ledge of the cliff and running parallel to the river. This is called the Hendrik Hudson Drive. About a mile this side of Alpine, where the road ends, it leads up to the top of the Palisades, where there is another unimproved road running above the Hendrik Hudson Drive and also parallel to the river. This is an old wood road. On the river side of it there are a number of old large houses, right on the edge of the cliff overlooking the river. Dr. Manx's home is one of these. It occupies the entire area on a point or bay of rock on each side of which there is a deep chasm running almost sheer down to the Hendrik Hudson Drive. The house is a big, rambling,

two-story structure. Built, as it is, near the edge of the cliff, with only a yard and garage separating it from the edge, the only view the inhabitants could have of the river is either from the rear windows of the house or from the roof. They therefore had a flat roof built on which there is quite a garden. Lately this roof garden has been converted into a sort of combination garden and gym, with several varieties of gym apparatus. Mrs. Manx spends a lot of time there. She gets to the roof by a sort of lift or elevator that was built expressly for her purpose. She gets about unaided in her wheel chair." *

Then Jimmy briefly related the result of his errand at Columbia University.

"That's about all, chief. As I told you, there is no story. Young Manx is in perfect health

* Shortly after the occurrences in the Manx home here recorded, the New York and New Jersey authorities announced the building of the Fort Lee Bridge spanning the Hudson. In response to the resultant land boom, practically all of this land, immediately above the Hendrik Hudson Drive as far south as Palisades Park, was cut up and sold for building and speculative purposes. A few landowners and holders of large estates held on until they were literally forced out by the approaching tide. The unimproved road that Jimmy spoke of is now a concrete road running from Englewood Cliffs to Alpine.

and my friend Matthews scoffs at the idea of anyone giving him meningitis with murderous intent."

"Did you go into the house, Jimmy?"

"No, I couldn't do that, could I? How could I go in and ask when their son was going to die of meningitis! I got all this information from some gabby neighbors."

Hite nodded and looked at the note silently for a minute. Then he dropped it into the wastebasket and curtly told Jimmy to go home, himself putting on his hat and coat preparatory to leaving.

Three weeks later, an undertaker sent in an obituary notice announcing the death of Conrad Manx, Jr. The cause of death was given as meningitis.

CHAPTER II

THUS began what was to be one of the most gruesome, and, at the same time, most grotesque series of events that criminal history has ever recorded. And Hite and his staff were like raging maniacs. Hite had what is meat and drink to the newspaperman—a good story, and *he was not able to use it.* He compared himself to a man dying of thirst, tied hand and foot and securely gagged, at the edge of a cool, burbling brook.

With the high regard for the ethics of his profession that was one of his principal characteristics, he could not see his way clear to using a story based on nothing more tangible than an anonymous note. And the worst feature of the case was that he did not even possess the note. It had gone into the wastebasket after Jimmy's report and its recovery was a more hopeless task than finding the proverbial needle in a haystack.

Much against his inclination, he communicated with one of his colleagues on another

paper in the hope that the other had received a similar note. He was neither disappointed nor surprised when he received a negative answer. The man he asked had either not received such a message or, if he had, he had thrown it away and forgotten it. Hite did the usual thing in such a case; he sent out two of his star men to unearth what they could in the matter. He did this perfunctorily, not being very hopeful of getting any tangible results.

Jimmy's first visit this time was to District Attorney McCall. Since their intimate contact during the Poison Plague, a genuine friendship had developed between the two. This friendship was founded on mutual respect. When McCall had listened carefully to the whole story, he asked, "This home of Dr. Manx is in New Jersey, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then what in the name of common sense have I got to do with it? What status have I in this matter?"

"None, Mac, and I know it. I merely came here to get your professional opinion. Here is a hypothetical question you lawyers love so much. If this home were in your jurisdiction

and I brought this story to you and if you believed it, and a lot of other ifs, what would you do in the matter?"

"Nothing!" promptly answered McCall. "Not a thing. What could I do? You come to me with a story of an anonymous note with a Hebrew numeral, that forecasts someone's death—not death by violence, mind you, but death by a disease, that physicians say could not readily be induced. What could I do in the matter? If this prophecy had been concerned with a death by violence or poison, I might stretch my powers and authority and take official cognizance, but not here. This weird prophecy you speak of, and the death itself, is in all probability a mere coincidence."

"Coincidence your aunt's kitten! I love to hear you practical-minded lawyers talk, when it suits you to substantiate a certain theme. I suppose you put that in the category with 'evidence,' 'proof,' et cetera! You and I know a great many things are true that you could not prove to the satisfaction of a judge and jury, not the kind of proof a superior court would not upset, anyway.

"Here is a simple little thing. You've stud-

ied mathematics, of course, and you know that the product of two minuses is plus, don't you?"

Jimmy paused until McCall nodded affirmatively.

"Prove it!" shot out Jimmy. After waiting to get the proper effect in the growing expression of perplexity that spread over the official's features, Jimmy continued.

"Do you know how few persons out of a million get meningitis? Do you know that even the highly developed serum they have discovered is ineffective in combating certain types of this disease?"

McCall looked at his friend in half-grim amusement.

"My, Jimmy, what I wouldn't give for such an imagination! No wonder you are such a darn good newspaperman. How you would love to make a story out of this!"

"Do you mean to say," sputtered Hale, "that after all I've said you could not see your way clear to take some official action?"

"My dear, imaginative young friend, do you realize that if we took cognizance of every crazy anonymous note that came to the papers or to us, we would need a policeman for every

inhabitant?" Then he continued to murmur, half to himself, "Smart man, this James Hale is. He wants someone to take official action in the matter. Official action becomes public action and therefore public property. Public property is, well, it is public property, meaning newspaper property. This would, of course, make a fine story for the bright young reporter, James Hale. Smart! Brilliant! He is—"

The younger man stood up in speechless indignation.

"Oh, you can go to—er—er, you go to read Blackstone!" And he walked out, slamming the door.

The result of his next two visits to physicians being negative, Jimmy decided to tackle Matthews once more in the hope that he could get a helpful inkling from Professor Brierly. When Matthews was told of the recent developments in the case, he consented to take his friend in to the old man. Jimmy once more experienced the half-pleasurable tingle that meeting the professor always gave him. The first glance of the old man's eyes always affected him much as would a mild current from a galvanic battery. He, as well as others, al-

ways felt the scientist's remarkable personality.

He noted again, as if for the first time, the small, exquisitely formed body, not over five feet tall; the tiny hands and feet, bushy, snow-white hair, bushy black brows over dark blue eyes so deeply sunken in their sockets as to seem jet black; the high, fresh complexion rarely found except in infancy. He nodded with less than his usual curtness in recognition of Jimmy's presence. Jimmy drew back when he saw that the old man was talking to a visitor, but his friend, by a nod, assured him that it was all right. He introduced Jimmy to the caller, a pathologist from one of the hospitals.

"Professor," explained Matthews, "Mr. Hale has a story that I believe might interest you." The old man nodded toward the newspaperman, looking at him inquiringly.

With the newspaperman's ability to get to the heart of a story without unnecessary detail, Jimmy framed his story in two sentences. He began:

"Three weeks ago our office received an anonymous communication stating that a certain person would die of meningitis. This—"

He got no further. Professor Brierly waspishly interrupted him.

"What of it? Why should a newspaper have nothing better to waste its time on, and the time of its valuable reporters?"—looking sarcastically at Jimmy—"than to pay attention to an anonymous note. Particularly, why should you waste my time on it?"

Jimmy finished his story.

"This morning we received an obituary notice of this man's death—by meningitis."

If the reporter expected to surprise Professor Brierly with this startling statement, he was disappointed. The old man received it indifferently.

"Well, why not? This merely confirms the theme we have often discussed, about the possibilities latent in a scientific criminal. But the note—" He paused in thought a moment, then shrugged impatiently. "You will have to excuse me, Mr. Hale. I have no time for such trifles. I am not a detective. Go to your police, this is their work."

But the star reporter does not become one without a large amount of persistence. Jimmy stuck manfully to his task. He reminded the

old man of their former traffic. Professor Brierly, during their contacts in the poison case, had cause to modify his opinion of this particular reporter, even though he still held his profession in rather low esteem. He finally consented to give ear and he asked the reporter to repeat what he had said.

Jimmy repeated, slowly and carefully, spacing his words. After a moment, the old man's habitual antagonism to what he called "trifling, inconsequential encroachments on my valuable time" became milder. He glanced at his other visitor. The latter smiled.

"What do you think of it, doctor?" he asked.

Dr. Means shook his head emphatically. "Highly improbable. How could—" At this point, the old man interrupted and turned to Jimmy. "What kind of meningitis was it?"

Jimmy stared vacantly. "What kind of meningitis? Why, just meningitis, that's all. Are there different kinds?"

Then all were treated to one of the professor's outbursts.

"Oh, you newspapermen! All alike. Ignoramuses, all of you. You come to a man of

science to get his help, you come here to get my help, and what—" He sputtered a moment and then continued. "Might as well ask me to solve a problem in simple arithmetic with *all* the factors unknown!"

"Would the death certificate give that information, professor?" asked Jimmy meekly.

"If the certificate is made out by the average idiot it might not," rasped the old man.

"Excuse me a minute. Lemme see if I can find out." Jimmy walked to the outer room where there was a telephone and after some inquiries he returned, looking ruefully at a sheet of copy paper on which he had made some notes. "Here is something which may mean something to you folks. The nearest I could get it over the phone is that he died of epidemic cerebrospinal—"

"Ah," interrupted the professor, "what type?"

Again Jimmy stared vacantly, while Matthews turned hastily away to muffle choking noises. Jimmy glared murderously at the back of his friend's head. When the latter turned and saw the glare, he went off into a fresh spasm.

"Why all this levity?" snapped the old man. "What's so funny about it? Do you think you know more than Mr. Hale?" After eying Matthews for a while without eliciting a response, he turned once to Dr. Means.

"Well, doctor?"

The latter once again shook his head and repeated, "Highly improbable. That type, as other types, is often caused by a blow and is of the traumatic variety. If anyone planned to deliver a blow at a person's head or spine, how could he foretell that it would result in meningitis?"

Professor Brierly was listening carefully. Then he waved the objection away impatiently. "The micro-organisms could be injected, of course."

"A micro-organism, Jimmy, is a germ," interjected Matthews. The old man glared wrathfully at the interruption.

"It could be done to a child, of course, through the fontanelle—"

"The fontanelle, Jimmy," again interjected Matthews, "is the soft spot in a baby's head."

"Keep quiet!" exploded the old man.

"It could be done in various— By the way"

—he turned suddenly with one of his characteristic birdlike movements to the newspaperman—"had this man ever been severely wounded in the head?"

"Yes, I remember that when I first looked up the case, that came out. He was hit in the head with a piece of shell."

"In that case"—the professor turned again to Dr. Means—"if his skull had been trepanned and not replaced by a metallic plate, it would provide what would be virtually a fontanelle, would it not?" Dr. Means nodded agreement.

"Mr. Hale, will you make inquiries and learn if this man had suffered such an injury and if his skull was left in that condition? You go with him, John, and see that he learns what we want to know."

"Trepanned, Jimmy, or trephined," explained Matthews, as Jimmy was waiting for his telephone connection to be completed, "means cutting out a piece of skull. This is often done where in an injury to the head a piece of bone is pressing on the brain. When this piece is not replaced by a metal plate, it leaves a soft spot that is similar to the baby's soft spot, and would give ready access to the

cranial cavity by means of a hypodermic needle, say, or something like that."

With Matthews at his side to coach him, Jimmy, after an exasperating series of delays and interviews with clerks who could not understand technical terms any better than he, finally got the information he was after and they returned to the professor. When they told the old man that the injury was as he had surmised, he nodded with satisfaction.

"Then that is the way it was probably done."

"Could that be verified in an autopsy now, professor?"

"Not likely. The disease would cause such structural changes in the tissue immediately involved and the near-by area that it would probably be impossible to detect the slight wound made by a thin hypodermic needle."

"Why do you assume that that is the way it was done?" asked Dr. Means.

"Because it all seems to fit. Let us assume that the disease was induced with murderous intent. The anonymous note would indicate that it was planned, carefully planned. The note was written either by the murderer, who is suffering from a homicidal mania, one of the

symptoms of which is this kind of secret bragging; or by someone else who had knowledge of what was going to happen.

"If murder was planned, it was planned by a person who has more than the average layman's knowledge of such things. This is one of the few types of meningitis that is almost always fatal and the murderer knew it, if there be a murderer."

"Wouldn't that kind of injection cause acute pain and make the victim cry out, professor?" asked Matthews.

"That's a mere detail. And, at any rate, all this is idle speculation. I know I could kill a person that way or in many ways that are considerably more obscure. We do not know at present if there was murder committed, or if there is a murderer. The data we have at present is surely insufficient for an exact scientific conclusion. It would be mere guessing and scientists do not guess. It is all right for *you* to guess," stabbing his finger in Jimmy's direction, "or you," pointing derisively at his assistant. "Bring me more accurate details and I can tell you something, perhaps; otherwise you are wasting my time." He was about to dis-

miss them curtly, but Jimmy held his ground.

"But, professor, suppose a crime had been committed—"

"Then your police will apprehend the culprit, and that is all there is to it. I am not a policeman."

"But if the police cannot—"

"If the police cannot, this will not be the first or last time that the police are helpless in the face of a real emergency. I have told you repeatedly that given a man with sufficient motive and the proper kind of scientific training, he could go on indefinitely committing murders by wholesale, without leaving what you call a 'clue.'

"What you, like the police, do not seem to recognize is that there are a great many crimes committed that are never recognized as crimes. I have told you that often enough. Here is a concrete case. Suppose you had not received that note. What would you have done? Nothing! If it should develop that this Manx died of meningitis in the regular orthodox way, that will not prove me wrong. It would still be true that he might have been murdered. I tell you emphatically that I could induce

meningitis that would prove fatal, or any of twenty other diseases that would be just as fatal. And who knows how many persons are perverting medical science into such channels? The world may wake up to learn some time that a little brains and knowledge in the police department can be of real social service."

He paused a moment. "Have you given me all the information you have available on the subject?"

"Well, yes. I believe I have given you all that might be of interest to you, sir." The slight inflection on the personal pronoun attracted Professor Brierly's notice.

"What do you mean, to me? Would it be of interest to someone else?"

"Well, in the note of warning one letter was a Hebrew character; so in the vague hope that I might get something that would give me a story, I took the note up to Columbia University. There I got hold of a man who knows Hebrew thoroughly, although we have a man in the office who knew what the letter was. The man up at Columbia was particularly interested in the Hebrew character. He said there was something unusual in the character

of the ALEF itself and that it reminded him of something odd in connection with it that he couldn't recall."

"What struck him as odd about the letter?"

"He said something to the effect that all its salient characteristics were exaggerated or accentuated. He said that if you took our own letter A and made the angles more acute or more obtuse, if you made the thin portions thinner, the thickly shaded, heavy portions thicker and added a few flourishes, you would have an A in the same way that that character was an ALEF. What interested him particularly was the fact that the letter appeared to be a tracing. That fact reminded him vaguely of something strange about the source of that letter.

"He said jokingly that the book from which the letter was traced was probably out of print —he had not seen a similar ALEF in a long time —and that, if out of the hundred and ten or twenty million persons in this country we could find the owner of such a book, there was a good chance that we would have the writer of that note."

"Yes," said the professor ironically, "that's right. There is one of the clues that your ideal

detective revels in." Then his eye lit up with a gleam of additional interest. "He said that it was traced and that he had not seen a character like that for a long time?"

"Yes, as nearly as I can recall, that is what he said."

"Interesting!" mused the professor. "What was this man's name?"

"Dr. Moyer."

He abruptly dismissed the newspaperman and turned to his other visitor.

When they were in the outer room, Jimmy said to Matthews, "Well, I got something, anyway. Do you know Dr. Conrad Manx?"

"I don't know him personally, but I know of him. I know him very well by reputation."

"He's the father of this Manx who died of meningitis, you know."

Matthews nodded. "You're on the wrong track, Jimmy. That would be a little too obvious, wouldn't it? His being the only person in the house with sufficient knowledge to plan and sufficient skill to execute such a plan?"

"What is there particularly obvious about it? It's obvious to you and obvious to me, because we know about that anonymous note.

But suppose that note had not been written—he would be perfectly safe, wouldn't he?"

"Ye-e-s, Jimmy, that's so, but I wouldn't jump to conclusions too fast. I'd hate to think such a thing about such a man. I'd step cautiously, if I were you."

"Oh, I'll step cautiously enough, but I'm sold on your chief in there"—nodding toward the inner room—"he usually knows what he's talking about. If he says that he could do it, I know it's so and there are others who could do it, too. I can't get that note out of my mind. It's not a coincidence—it's all too pat. Guess I'll take a trip out there and take in the funeral. That will give me a chance to look at the people and sort of look the ground over."

CHAPTER III

JIMMY was in luck. When he came to the Manx home, he identified an alert, eager-eyed young man as one of the local reporters. He was right. The youngster was from the *Daily Record*, of Hackensack. This young man was glad to meet Jimmy, who introduced himself. With his help—he seemed to know everyone present—Jimmy was able to pick out all the important figures and follow their movements closely. Each person was pointed out to him, named, and identified with a brief personal history.

While the service itself was such as he had seen many times when he was a cub reporter, this particular one had for him high latent possibilities and poignant drama. As he listened to the steady stream of talk that flowed from the lips of the young reporter, he wondered who of those present was the murderer, who the sender of the note, if either, or both, or both in one were present. The heavy odor of flowers,

which usually made him uneasy, went unnoticed now, in the excitement of the moment.

First to attract his attention was Mrs. Petersen, the housekeeper. She was a heavy, stolid woman, her few gray strands inconspicuous amid the heavy coils of her ash-colored hair. She was square and rugged as the rocky crags on the shores of her native land. She still retained the natural high color that many younger women would have given much to possess. She went about quietly and efficiently, always appearing just where she was most needed. On several occasions she was ready with ministering water or smelling salts, assisting visitor or member of the family alike.

Off to one side of the room, beyond the end of the casket, Jimmy suddenly saw the mistress of the house, almost hidden by a bank of flowers. She was in her wheel chair and she looked on the scene stonily. At the first glance, Jimmy was startled. Because of her illness, he expected to see a wan, pale face. On the contrary, he saw features that were arresting in their vivid beauty. Beyond occasionally carrying her handkerchief to her lips, she sat motionless throughout the ceremony.

Behind her chair, almost completely hidden from view, stood her husband, Dr. Manx. A broad massive man, one who gave the impression of tremendous physical and mental strength. He was a man who would stand out in any group. His fine strong features acquired dignity and distinction by reason of an iron-gray beard, cut square. One of his hands rested lightly on the back of the invalid's chair. Even at that considerable distance, Jimmy was aware of the strength and virility expressed by those capable-looking hands.

Among all those present, the maid, Adele Le Moyne, showed the most visible demonstration of grief. Jimmy looked curiously at this young woman. She was rather good-looking, with full figure and full lips. What particularly attracted his attention to her was a bit of by-play that he saw during the services. Robert Manx was being pointed out to him by his guide. He recognized from the description that this must be the black sheep who had recently returned. As Jimmy was observing this young man, leaning against one of the mantels, he saw a look of sardonic amusement pass fleetingly across his face. Turning quickly, Jimmy saw that this

look was directed at Adele, who had just then, after a look at the casket, given vent to a hysterical spasm of sobbing.

Jimmy also saw Alice, the younger daughter, who had come home from school for the funeral. Alice was an attractive young girl, about as Jimmy had pictured her. She strongly resembled Robert and displayed only the signs of grief that might have been expected. Her lack of color and general lassitude Jimmy ascribed to her bereavement.

Cora, the older daughter, and David Mooney were also in evidence. Cora was a splendid-looking young matron, on the sunny side of thirty. Her husband was a thin, restless individual who seemed unable to keep still. He moved about, in and out of the room, talking to a number of those present, receiving many of the visitors. When unoccupied with anyone, he still moved about or nervously fussed with his tie pin, his watch chain. He bit at his nails and showed signs of extreme irritability and nervousness generally.

Outside on the lawn, the reporter saw the young boy, Harry, going about and whimpering like a lost puppy.

Jimmy had a vague impression that the two daughters, Cora and Alice, showed each in her own way a lack of physical vitality that was greater than could be accounted for by their present trouble. He dismissed this idea from his mind, realizing that the wording of the note received by Hite, and the use of the Hebrew letter which stood for the numeral one, perhaps led him to look for illness and approaching decay in every member of the Manx family. The note had inferred that there might be others snuffed out. Jimmy had a vivid imagination. He knew it and ascribed his suspicions to that.

On this visit, the reporter did not see the chauffeur or the gardener. Afterwards, when he came to cast up his impressions of the entire scene, he realized that at such a time it is difficult to form an accurate estimate of humans. He had seen so many persons react to grief at the loss of a near relative in so many different ways. He had seen so much genuine sorrow met with a smile and so much artificial lamentation accompanied by loud wailings, that he knew his own impressions were not to be trusted. Nevertheless, he did the best he

could and came away with no more than he had on his first visit to the neighborhood.

Professor Brierly's opinion, that that particular type of meningitis might be caused under those peculiar conditions by an outside agency with murderous intent, was the only definite hint of a real story in the entire affair.

His first two hours the next day were barren of result. On his second telephonic report, he was prepared apathetically to receive Hite's growl of dissatisfaction, when he was stimulated to electrical attention by Hite's first words over the telephone.

"Come right over, Jim, another note came in."

"What!"

"Don't yell, damn it. Come into the office and I'll tell you." The click of Hite's receiver brought the dialogue to a close.

"Here," he said, as Jimmy approached his desk, holding out a note very similar to the one that had arrived three weeks before. It also was made up of letters cut from a newspaper and pasted on the sheet to make up a message. As nearly as Jimmy could remember, it was on

the same kind of notepaper. This message read:

Soon another Manx will be number ב.

"What is that character, chief?"

"Can't you guess?"

"The second letter in the Hebrew alphabet?"

"Yes, the BETH, the second letter and also used to indicate the numeral 2."

Jimmy experienced a tingle of fear—fear of and for the Manx family. In his zeal as a reporter after a good "story," the sheer horror of it all, the terrific possibilities had escaped him. Now, all at once, the reiterated statements along the same theme made by Professor Brierly sent a chill up and down his spine. With vivid dread he recalled the professor's words:

"I tell you emphatically that I could induce meningitis that would prove fatal, or any of twenty other diseases that would be just as fatal. And who knows how many persons are perverting medical science into such channels?"

Jimmy's skin prickled with a trace of superstitious awe. Something of what was going on in his mind must have shown on his face, be-

cause the older man looked at him curiously and asked, "What is it, Jim?"

The reporter told him of his recent interview with the professor and repeated what the old man had said. "Sounds foolish, chief, but this has somehow got me. Those notes, that queer house, high up on the Palisades."

Hite nodded somberly.

"Guess this has become more than a story, Jimmy. It sounds slushy, I know, and many cynics would laugh to hear me say so, but we *do* owe a duty to the public. We have a social obligation, eh, son?" He paused, tapping his teeth with the stem of his corncob pipe. "I'll run a story in the first edition about the first note, the death of young Manx, the funeral, and the second note. We must have something of his war record in the morgue. I'll run it on the front page and build the story around his war record, citation for valor, and so on, and the two mysterious notes. Meanwhile, you dig up what you can about it. What you going to do now?"

"I'll run up to McCall and see if some official action can't be hung on it. Then I'll tackle Professor Brierly again. He may help us and

what he says will be news, anyhow. Then, unless McCall knows something to the contrary from the official point of view, I'll go at the Jersey authorities. If I can get them to do something, I'll tag along and get into the Manx home with them. Then we'll see."

Hite nodded his approval at this program.

"We've been through it before, eh, Jim? Let's go to it. You go on, I don't have to tell you what to do. Go as far as you like; we'll back you up."

Hite was in one of his rare moods and Jimmy recognized that only the deadly seriousness of the case would make the older man drop the harsh, cynical mask that he habitually wore. The thing had now become more than a story with the possibility of "beating" the town. He nodded and left the city room.

Dr. Moyer received him smilingly this time. He remembered Jimmy's former visit.

"Any more murder notes?"

Jimmy held out the new message.

"M-m-m, yes. I see. Enterprising person. By the way, was the first note followed by any, er—results?"

"Yes, young Manx died of meningitis."

"What!" The mild man to whom life was just one language after another reacted to this statement with entire satisfaction to Jimmy.

"Well! you newspapermen do get something out of life that we, who are so far away from reality, miss. Let me see, I see that this note is traced, too, and I suppose that the writer meant this letter for the numeral two."

"What do you mean, he meant it for the numeral two? Doesn't it mean that to you?"

"Well, you see, the letter as traced on this note has no real place in the Hebrew alphabet, and certainly not if used for the numeral two. The letter as traced here has the value of our V. If you put a dot right in the center of the letter, you would convert it into a B. The second letter in the Hebrew alphabet is the BETH, the equivalent of the Roman B. This tracing when used in the alphabet is used as the third letter, but actually it is not the third. It is an adjunct to the second. In spite of its position in the alphabet, as the third letter, it has no place in numbering. In numbering, the GIMMEL is used, which corresponds to our hard G, to denote the numeral three. The real Hebrew V

is the VOV and is used to express the number six."

Jimmy's mind reeled under all this but he held his ground valiantly and asked Dr. Moyer to repeat, and slowly. The doctor did so, obligingly, and the newspaperman took copious notes, a task which he disliked. Dr. Moyer said much more about Hebrew and its characters, to which Jimmy resolutely shut his ears.

"Does this character in this note also stir your memory, as the other did?"

"Yes," the other answered musingly. "In the same way as the other. This merely stimulated my desire to remember what was so strange about the source from which this was undoubtedly traced, but I cannot for the life of me remember it. I shall sometime, probably."

With a promise to let him know of any more notes, Jimmy thanked him and departed.

It was not the usual light-hearted Jimmy who visited McCall that morning. The district attorney knew the reporter so well that he at once responded to the latter's mood and bent an attentive ear to Jimmy's story.

"I'm going to repeat what I said in our last talk, Jim. What can I do in the matter? I

have no status or jurisdiction. Just how can I help you?"

"Gosh, how I wish this had happened in New York."

"God forbid," ejaculated McCall, with uplifted hand.

"I mean," continued the younger man, "that here in New York I'd know how to get yards of red tape cut. There might not be so much talk of status and jurisdiction. It would be a cinch to—"

"Do you mean to insinuate, Mr. Hale, that I would overstep my authority in such a matter or in any kind of matter to help a friendly reporter?"

Jimmy received this severe reprimand with a grin, his usual good humor restored.

"No, of course not, but a lot of people in town here are afraid of me, I know too much about 'em. If this happened here, Mac, in view of the receipt of the second note, couldn't you take official action? Remember, the first note was followed by a real death."

"No, I don't think I could take official cognizance of such a note; but nothing could prevent me from placing two pretty good plain-

clothes men on guard and having a doctor and nurse in constant attendance. I could do that, of course."

"Could I induce His High and Mightiness in New Jersey to do that?"

"I don't know, you can try. Let's see, the prosecutor for that county is Harmon. You might go and see him."

"Could you give me a note to him, as from one official to another, you know? Isn't there a sort of professional ethics, sort of honor among thieves? Such a note might help."

"Yes, it might help; it might help you get thrown out of his office. No, Jimmy, that won't do. I had occasion recently to tell that gentleman what I thought of him. It would serve your interests best if you told him that you did not know me or that you did not like me. Better tackle it on your own. You're a pretty good little persuader, when you're obliged to be. Go ahead and good luck to you."

"All right, and thanks. I'll have another little talk with our friend the professor and then I'll hie me to Jersey and see if the prosecuting attorney of Bergen County is as hard to con-

vince as this hard-boiled cosmopolitan District Attorney McCall of ours. S'long. I'll let you know developments."

He was ushered at once into Professor Brierly's laboratory, when he had explained to Matthews the new phase in the series of events. The professor was rapt attention when the reporter told him of the new note. He asked for a particularly detailed account of this message. After studying it for a while, he remarked, "This, I believe, is not the character used for the numeral two. Indeed, it has no place as a numeral at all. You see—"

"Yes, professor, Dr. Moyer up at Columbia told me about that. I didn't know you knew Hebrew."

"I don't—just a smattering. That, of course, is elementary." He mused for a time, then asked, "Are there by chance any others in the household with similar head wounds?"

"None that I know of."

"Any infants in the house?"

"No—or, wait a minute, yes. Dr. Manx's daughter has a year-old infant."

Professor Brierly looked once more at the note.

"But that is mere guessing. The note does not mention meningitis this time; and it does not have to be meningitis. The person who conceived that method of killing the young man does not have to confine himself to meningitis. There are dozens of ways—"

"Suppose a guard were placed there, professor?"

"Piffle!" snapped the old man. "Could a policeman protect you from being struck by lightning? Could a detective protect you against smallpox?"

'Those diseases have been checked, professor," murmured Jimmy weakly.

"Certainly. Proper prophylaxis and vaccination have checked yellow fever and smallpox, but a lightning rod would not ward off disease any more than antitoxins or vaccination would ward off lightning. If you put a guard in the Manx house, what will you guard against?

"The writer of the note obligingly told you that young Manx would die of meningitis. What good did it do? If that note had been relied and acted upon, it may be that Manx might be alive today. But this note is differ-

ent. If you put detectives there, what will they be asked to watch and whom will they watch?

"No, no, all this is of no value. Let us think clearly, scientifically. Let me put myself in that person's place. What would I do?"

He began to pace the floor, taking short, nervous strides. This, with him, was a sign of extreme mental agitation. He stopped suddenly and glared at the two young men. Then he went on, bitterly.

"Think of the inadequacy and inefficiency of us poor humans and our boasted science. Here is a person stalking murderously, having we know not what diabolic notions; and we are forced to sit supinely by and wait until more murders are committed, and then what? Then we can merely point out how it was done. After the mischief is done. And yet—"

"You got the poisoner in the other case," soothed Jimmy.

"That poisoner was a lunatic. He left a trail that was as broad as that left by a herd of elephants."

Jimmy smiled. That broad trail had not been plain enough for the police of the entire country to follow. The old man continued:

"That was an entirely different case. A number of people were poisoned with a drug the action of which is well known. All I had to do was point to the manner in which the drug was administered; finding the agent was merely a matter of course. This is different. A note is sent apprising us that someone will die of a certain disease. That person dies. Now another note is sent. And what does it say? That another Manx will die. Which Manx and what is he threatened with? The note neither mentions the person nor what the danger is. It seems hopeless, and yet—"

He paused and pointed at Jimmy. "Use your boasted power of the press to obtain for me permission to make an independent autopsy. I do not have much hope, as I told you, but I see a faint glimmer. There is a vague something that may give us something definite, something tangible. Can you do it?"

"I don't know, professor, but I'll certainly try."

"Do it, and let me know as soon as you can. It may be too late even now. And let me know instantly of new developments."

"The police—" began Jimmy.

"The police are children, with all the ignorance of children, without the child's priceless gift of imagination. Let us not discuss it further. See that I am permitted to make this autopsy."

CHAPTER IV

STRANGELY enough, by the time he stepped off the train at Hackensack, the county seat of Bergen County, Jimmy had convinced himself that he could convince the authorities of that county that they ought to take the kind of official action that would form the basis for a story. And stranger still, he actually convinced Prosecuting Attorney Harmon that he ought to take such action. It is not certain whether this was due to Jimmy's persuasive powers or to the fact that this official was a politician first, and a public official because he was a politician. Jimmy did not find here the honesty and practical good sense that were such outstanding characteristics of his friend McCall. He found, instead of vigorous honesty, an artificial bluff frankness and good-fellowship; instead of sound common sense, a sly shrewdness. Besides, Harmon was much impressed with his own importance as one of the county's foremost officials.

When County Prosecutor Harmon heard

Jimmy's story, he at once saw possibilities—possibilities for Harmon. He had a vision of Harmon's name in big screaming headlines across the press of the country, and particularly New York. Jimmy did nothing to make that vision less rosy. Harmon consented at once to accompany Jimmy to the home of Dr. Manx. He sent for the chief of his detective staff from an outer office and the three started.

While they were driving in the official's car through Hackensack, Teaneck, Englewood, and up the series of hills to Englewood Cliffs, Jimmy was forced to listen to a stream of praise of Bergen County and its principal official. The tenor of the conversation, as nearly as he could gather, was that if it were not for the principal official of the county, Prosecutor Harmon, the county would have to go out of business.

He became once more the alert newspaperman as they turned north, just before reaching the descent leading to the Dyckman Street ferry. He looked once more with renewed interest at the half-wild country as they traveled along the deeply rutted, stony wood road. When they reached the house, his tense inter-

est in everything he saw was hidden under his usual smiling, good-natured exterior.

About midway to Alpine, they turned off into a wide driveway that took them for a short distance through a beautiful grove of trees. The grove ended in a wide lawn as they approached the house. A short distance from the front of the building, the ground was sharply constricted to form the point of land or bay on which it was built.

The maid answered their ring and she asked them to sit while she took their message to the head of the house. They found themselves in a wide reception hall which ended at a wall at the rear, in which were two doors, leading to rear rooms apparently. The doors to the front rooms on both sides of the hall were open and they could thus see both sides of the house. They noticed that their view through the windows on the left was cut off. They learned later that this was an addition to the left rear of the house, forming an L, the alteration having been made by the present owners. They also learned that this L housed the women domestics. They noted, too, that the wide porch that abutted the front of the house was contin-

ued on both sides, affording a wide, open porch.

Before they had time to take in much more than this, the maid returned and conducted them to the right rear door opening off the hall. Here they met Dr. Manx, who stood up with Old World courtesy and bade them be seated. When he resumed his seat at the flat-topped desk at which he had been writing, his back was toward the window at the rear of the house, the sill of which was nearly touched by his chair. A log fire was blazing in the fireplace and lent an air of cheer and warmth to what might otherwise have been a somber room. The furnishings were simple and severe. Several kinds of apparatus and a microscope on a small table near his desk showed this to be his consulting room.

Jimmy tried in vain to probe the imperturbable mask before him. He saw a copy of his own paper spread out before the doctor on the broad desk. Jimmy knew without reading it that that edition must carry the story Hite had outlined to him. But there was no sign from the man at the desk that anything untoward had happened to disturb his equanimity. He looked at the men inquiringly.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" His glance rested briefly on each of the three men in turn, and then back at the card in his hand. "You are here on official business? Which of you is Mr. Harmon?"

"I am," announced that official. "We have come to inquire about your son's death. There is something, er—well, there is something odd about it, which prompts this inquiry."

"Yeah, somepin funny," supplemented his assistant.

"Odd—funny?" with a rising inflection.

"Well, you see," resumed Harmon, "Mr. Hale, here, is from the *Herald*. He tells me that about three weeks ago they received a note at his office that may have an important bearing on the—on your recent bereavement."

Jimmy could feel the distaste in the glance that swept over him. For the time, he ascribed it as being partly due to the antagonism that such men feel for men in the newspaper profession. He also had a faint impression that there was something deeper in it than that. He admitted to himself at the same time that that was probably due to what he knew of the entire matter.

Harmon continued. "They received a queer note, unsigned, to the effect that your son would die of meningitis." He paused uncertainly. The head of the house was not the kind of man he was accustomed to interviewing in his official capacity. Dr. Manx was not an easy man to approach under any circumstances. Harmon began to feel distinctly uneasy. His customary official pomposity was dropping from him like a mantle. The doctor said nothing. His large capable hands with the broad spatulate fingers lay flat on the desk in front of him. He sat immovable.

At this point Jimmy took up the burden of the inquiry. After describing the note, he went on. "I had a talk with Professor Brierly about the matter, doctor."

At the mention of the professor's name, Dr. Manx's unreadable face showed a gleam of interest.

"The professor, when he was told the nature of your son's wound, stated that the type of meningitis he succumbed to might be induced through the opening of the old wound, by injection."

Dr. Manx's fingers, after a short pause, began

drumming softly on the polished surface of his desk.

"Yes?" he intoned gently.

Jimmy, though young in years, was a veteran interviewer. He decided at this point that straight talk was indicated.

"Under normal circumstances, my paper would not have paid any attention to an anonymous note. Something about the note, however, impelled my superior to assign me to the job of looking into the matter. This was three weeks ago. I made some inquiries in the neighborhood and heard the things one is certain to hear among one's neighbors in a place like this."

He paused to note the effect of this statement, but the doctor sat expressionless.

"What brings *me* up here today, really, is something that has lent additional significance to both the note and your son's death. If this had not happened, I don't think I should have presumed to invade your privacy. Newspapermen, you know," with an engaging, disarming smile, "are not the pests many give them credit for being.

"This morning my office received a note that

we have reason to believe came from the same source as the first one. This note states that another Manx will shortly be number two. There is probably an account of it in the paper before you."

Jimmy paused, expecting to elicit a response to this.

"Yes?" Dr. Manx again intoned softly.

"An' so, doc," Harmon's assistant broke in, "we come to get the low-down on this. Ya better come clean, or—"

Abruptly, as though released by a coiled spring, Dr. Manx stood up behind his desk. Pointing a paper cutter stabbingly at Harmon, he rumbled, "Are you responsible for or have you any control over this creature?"—nodding his head toward the chief of detectives. After a pause, Harmon's eyes dropped before the frosty glare.

"Well, I—you see—"

"Say, lissen here, doc," burst forth Connors again. The doctor's icy, cutting words and the admonitory pressure of Harmon's fingers on his knee stopped him.

"I do not suppose you have a warrant—yet. Let me remind you that you are in a house of

sorrow and that you are here on sufferance. I will not tolerate such language or such an attitude. If this is not modified at once, I shall have you all removed."

Jimmy was impressed with the great strength of the man; physical and mental domination radiated from his massive figure. He stood a moment leaning across the desk tensely and then sat down. After a short interval, he went on.

"Professor Brierly's opinion is undoubtedly sound. Such a thing *could* be done with a person who had a head wound such as my son had. So—so I take it that I, being a physician, and having easy access to my son, am the person most naturally under suspicion, most especially in view of the second note. Is that correct?" His brows bristled at each of his visitors in turn.

"Well, I have nothing to say on the matter at present, nor shall I have anything to say unless and until I am called on in a regular, legal, formal manner. I wish you gentlemen good day." He turned back to the paper on which he had been writing when interrupted and ignored their further presence. The three

men looked at one another and Harmon's companion was about to expostulate when he was stopped by an impatient shake of the prosecutor's head. The latter felt that he was not cutting a very heroic figure in the eyes of the newspaperman, whom he desired to impress.

As they filed into the hall, they were met with the murmur of voices from the adjoining room. After closing the door, they stood uncertainly, each busy with his own thoughts, wondering what was the next step in this domestic drama, when their attention was suddenly jerked back to the room they had just left.

A loud crash, only slightly muffled by the intervening door, as of breaking glass, accompanied by a deep rasping sound that was half groan and half cry, drew them swiftly back into the room. Here they stood rooted for a moment, before their senses realized what they saw.

Dr. Manx was still seated in the chair behind his desk. He was now slumped over toward the left side, being prevented from falling to the floor by the high arms of the chair and the front of the desk. His face was dis-

torted and blood was gushing profusely from ears and nose, while a red film of blood covered what had been his eyes. The window behind him was shattered. As the men entered the room, they all remembered later a fleeting impression of a small boy running toward the house from the rear of the yard, his eyes staring at the broken window. The boy stopped midway between the garage and the house and stared for a moment and then continued running toward the side of the house where the driveway was situated.

It did not need any great skill on the part of any of the men to see that the head of the house was beyond human aid.

Harmon snatched open the sliding doors to the large front reception room. Against this door were still piled in neat tiers the folded chairs which the undertaker had furnished for the funeral services. These were stacked close to the door, making it improbable that anyone had gone in or out through these doors in the interval that the three men had been out of the room.

They also had a fleeting glimpse of the shocked faces of some members of the family

and some visitors who were standing in groups in the other room.

Connors sprang toward the window, which he pushed up after a momentary fumbling with the catch. He yelled at the boy who was just disappearing into the driveway. The boy stopped and turned toward the detective, who seized his arms and almost savagely dragged him into the room through the window. After one glance at the back of the dead man's head, which was frightfully crushed, he turned his eyes toward the floor, expecting to find the missile that had done the mischief.

When he failed to find this immediately, he climbed out of the window and made a careful search of the ground outside. Immediately beneath the window, for about five feet from the house, was a concrete walk running from the right side of the building, where the driveway was, to the center of the addition to the house which formed the rear entrance. The most careful search here and of the surrounding ground failed to reveal what he sought. He climbed back into the house and made an exhaustive search of the entire room. A search that would have unearthed a marble failed to

uncover a large missile such as would have made such a hole in the window.

Connors now turned toward the boy.

"Now, kid, where's that stone you threw?"

"I didn't throw any stone, mister."

"What then did you throw?"

"I didn't throw anything. Honest, mister. That," pointing a shaking finger toward the figure in the chair, "that's my father." The muscles of his face twitched, he gulped once or twice and then burst into an uncontrollable fit of sobbing, gasping cries that shook him from head to foot.

Just then there came through the door a majestic figure of wrath. It was the housekeeper. Square-shouldered and hard, she took a place between the boy and the detectives, facing the latter fearlessly.

"Who are you? You leave that boy be. You make him cry, I make you sorry!" Glaring at the detective for a long moment, she took the child's hand and strode from the room, reminding one of nothing so much as a battleship.

Connors turned fiercely toward Harmon.

"What the hell is this, anyway? Couldn't

talk to him," pointing brutally to the figure in the chair, "because he was too fine to talk to the likes of me and now I can't ask a kid a couple of simple questions without a female come buttin' in. Say," addressing his chief aggressively, "you gimme authority and I'll make someone talk. Be-e-lie-ieve me, I'll make 'em *talk*."

Jimmy got a swift impression of the relation between the two men. Harmon, the politician, in office for political favors rendered in the past and to be rendered in the future. Connors, the work horse, the old retainer in the office who knew his work and knew each new incumbent of the chief's office, knew too much, perhaps, to make it entirely comfortable. Connors had a forthright honesty that appealed to Jimmy. He began to like Connors.

There was an electric tension in the air as Connors stood glaring at his chief, then the bigger man turned contemptuously away from the dapper prosecutor and swept the room with his eyes, taking in the huddled groups in the adjoining room. He lumbered toward it, slid the doors shut and returned, facing the two men resolutely.

"Now then, let's get the right of this. When we came back to the room I saw the kid running from the garage. You saw that, too. Right? There's only these two doors to this room, the one to the other room and the one to the hall. Right?"

Jimmy nodded.

"We know that this door was closed, 'cause we were right at it; we know that the other door was closed, 'cause the undertaker's chairs are still piled against it, and the window was closed when we left the room. Right?"

Jimmy realized that this way of ending each point made was purely rhetorical and that he was not expected to answer. Connors did not expect them to agree with him each time he asked "Right?" and he would be indifferent if they had not agreed.

"An' the catch on the window was closed from inside, 'cause I had to open it. Right? The kid couldn't've got back to the garage between the time we heard the crash and the time we came in the room. Either he threw the stone or whatever it was, or he saw someone who did. Right?

"The kid was too far from the window and

nobody else could 'a' put his arm in and take out whatever was throwed. It wasn't outside. I hunted all over in here. I watched the old harridan who took the kid away and I watched the kid, bet yer life, and they didn't take it away, so it must be right in this room. Right? If that's the case, let's look for it."

A painstaking search by the three men failed to uncover anything. Two drawers, one on each side of the desk, were open and they were searched in the hope that the missile had fallen into one of them. They were handicapped in their search because they did not want to touch the gruesome figure at the head of the desk until the county physician had examined it.

A call to Englewood and Fort Lee brought some men from the local police departments who were left on watch in the house and room. None of the visitors who had come was allowed to leave without submitting to a search for the missing missile.

When the county physician came in, Jimmy, Harmon and Connors eagerly watched the first superficial examination in the hope that the missile had lodged in a fold of clothing or was

hidden by some part of the body. They were disappointed in this.

After a perfunctory questioning of the inmates of the house, the room where the tragedy occurred was sealed by the county authorities and three men were left with orders not to leave the house unwatched at any time. Jimmy went to the nearest telephone and poured into the eager ear of the city editor the entire story, after which he called up Matthews and told him, for the professor's benefit, the new developments.

He then went to Hackensack to see Harmon. When he was informed that it would take three hours before he could get a detailed report of the autopsy from the office of the county physician, he went to the nearest telegraph office where he filed a full story for the late edition, and called it a day.

CHAPTER V

JIMMY was surprised, when he came back to the county physician's office early the following morning, to be told that two men, Brierly and Matthews, were inside assisting with the autopsy. The clerk in the anteroom told Jimmy that the younger of the two had left word to tell him of their presence as soon as he arrived. When he sent in word, Matthews came out at once.

" 'Lo, Jimmy, the old man didn't waste much time after we received your call. He insisted on being present at the autopsy as there are some things he wants to see for himself. You know what a high regard he has for the opinions of others in such matters.

"I never saw him so wrought up over a matter like this, since I have been with him. His attitude, more than anything else, convinces me of the deadly seriousness of this affair. The average murder that the newspapers report does not concern him at all. Indeed, very little, if any, current event touches him personally. It

is only in matters of special scientific interest and research that his life is touched intimately. He is, as you know, entirely aloof from the ordinary affairs of the world. Even in his research he is rarely interested in the human phases and contacts of his problem. I believe the reason he is so keenly interested now is that this is one of the rare occasions when one of his pet themes is being confirmed in real life. He insists that there are innumerable crimes committed that are never recognized as crimes at all.

"You'll be amused and surprised when I tell you that he regularly reads obituary notices; not for the morbid interest they have for the habitual reader of such notices but for their scientific interest. He frequently points out such a notice to me, a notice of a death by apparently natural cause or causes and he tells me tersely that he could cause death in that person in such a way that it would resemble the actual disease. Indeed, it would *be* the actual disease and that the death notice in such a case would be the conventional statement that such and such a person died of such and such a disease.

"He insists that these diseases could be in-

duced in a way that the most careful and skillful autopsy would not uncover the real cause of death. While I have the highest regard for him and the profoundest respect for his opinions, these reiterated statements of his have had for me only an academic interest. If I thought of them at all, I thought of them in the abstract. I could never imagine them applied to real life.

"With him it is different, you see. The only real life to him is the scientific life. Do not go away with the idea, from what I say, that his aloofness is coldness and indifference to human suffering. He merely looks at humanity in a large way, not personally as most of us do; and applied science is to him a reality, not a vision. His profound interest in this case proves that this is so. Deep down he is one of the most loving and lovable creatures on earth. His passion for pure thought and science is at the same time his real self and a mask for his real humaneness and humanity.

"But, say, I'd better stop. When I get started on the old man, I don't know where to leave off. No one knows him quite as I do and no human being could have done more for

anyone than he did for me, and I am only his adopted son. He has no relatives on whom to shower his affections, so his scientific activities and John Matthews form his only outlets."

"Has he any definite idea about this matter, Jack?"

Matthews grinned. "Don't you know yet, Jimmy, that if he had a 'definite' idea about it we could go and place our hands on the culprit? He'll reach the truth, I assure you. He'll reach it slowly but surely—that is his way; and from the way he is acting I am afraid that the truth will be sufficiently horrible to satisfy even your sensation-loving mind. He cannot be hurried, you know. He must go about it in his own way, the scientific way. Each step he takes will be capable of laboratory proof, proof beyond the shadow of a doubt. I feel certain, from his behavior, that this case will form an important milestone in the criminal history of the world."

At this point Professor Brierly sent out for his young assistant, and Jimmy was left waiting with what patience he could, for the discovery which might tell him something definite in this newest chapter of recorded crime. By this time the anteroom was full of a milling

crowd of reporters. Jimmy was acquainted with many of them, from the important news gathering syndicates and from rival papers. Others were there, too, from local papers, news reel film studios, special writers, novelists looking for new twists, writers of mystery and detectives stories.

In a very short time he became the center of the entire group. The news of the first and second notes, the method and place of their arrival, became public property. The veterans from the rival papers and the large syndicates did not ask him any questions. Some of the sob sisters and young reporters from the local sheets did. They plied him with an intermittent stream of questions. The latter got from him by their questions exactly what the veterans got by their silence—nothing.

All this served to pass the time for Jimmy until Professor Brierly and Matthews stepped out of the inner room, dressed and ready to go. They made a strange contrast, these two: one, small, stepping with nervous, mincing strides; the other, blond, a young gladiator with a perpetual, good-humored grin on his face. Those

who did not know them well, or their camaraderie, could never understand how the old man could tolerate the apparent levity and light-mindedness of the younger man. Few knew that Matthews was rapidly attaining a conspicuous place in the scientific world. The men were as different in temperament as they were in size. It was amusing to watch the solicitude with which the younger man hovered over his chief in their intimate contacts. It reminded one of a hen watching a single chick or a large mastiff and a fox terrier puppy.

With a nod of his head Matthews signified that they were going and waiting for him. Jimmy extricated himself from the clamoring group with some difficulty and accompanied Professor Brierly and Matthews. When they reached their car, the old man elected to drive. This was his one concession to what he called modern frivolity. He was passionately fond of motor-cars and driving. He had several cars specially geared for speed, which he enjoyed taking out on the speedway. With his precise knowledge of applied mechanics, he enjoyed making all adjustments himself. Only when

these required more strength than he possessed, did he consent to let others do it. At such times, he insisted on supervising the work.

He chose to drive now because, as he often said, driving gave him relaxation and at the same time permitted him to solve knotty problems. The ride through Hackensack, Bogota, Ridgefield Park, across the meadows, through Fort Lee and Edgewater to the 125th Street ferry was made uneventfully and practically in silence. The two young men occupied the rear seat in the open speedster and the old man's driving was such that conversation was not easy.

Arrived at the professor's home, the old man spent some time in getting his notes in order, leaving the young men to themselves. A ring at the bell announced a caller, and a trim maid brought in a card. The old man came out, looked at the card and snapped, "Tell him I cannot see him. I cannot be bothered with detectives. Newspapermen are trouble enough, goodness knows. Tell him I am not at home; tell him I am busy; tell him anything." After a short interval the maid returned and said that the visitor insisted on seeing Professor Brierly.

The old man turned to Matthews in exasperation.

"You go out and see him, John, and if he proves obdurate, throw him out. I do not wish to be bothered."

After another interval, the big young man returned grinning, and addressed Jimmy. "Says he's a friend of yours, Jim. Pretty big chap, typical bull. Come out and tell him that if I decide to throw him out, why, out he'll go."

Jimmy was amused when he saw Connors standing aggressively at the door.

"Say, Mr. Hale, I saw you get into the car and drive off with these folks from Hackensack and someone in Dr. Myer's office told me who they were. Mebbe we can work together on this thing, eh?"

Jimmy introduced him to Matthews and explained to the latter that Connors was with him and Harmon when Dr. Manx met his death. A barely perceptible wink induced the young man to go in and persuade the professor to see Connors.

During the introduction, Connors' huge paw hid the professor's hand entirely. Connors began heartily:

"Glad to meetcha, prof. I heard what you done in that poison—"

"Don't call me 'prof,'" snarled the old man as he snatched his hand away. "It is a low, vulgar appellation used—"

"But lissen, doc,—"

"Nor 'doc,'" almost spat the professor. "They are both disgustingly vulgar names used in cheap derision, or in cheaper flattery by pompous ignoramuses who are vain about empty titles."

"All right, pro—er, all right, sir. I heard what you done in that poison thing and I says to myself some of these highbrows isn't so useless after all. Right? An' when I heard that you was on this thing, this kind of thing bein' right in your line, and me bein' the chief of the detectives of Bergen County—and that's some little county, believe me—I says to myself, mebbe we can work together on it. Right?"

The professor excused himself to finish his work on the notes. As he left the room, Connors leaned toward Jimmy and asked out of the side of his mouth, in a hoarse whisper, "Say, what the hell can I call this old bird without hurtin' his feelings?"

"Call him 'Mr. Brierly' or 'Professor Brierly' or 'Dr. Brierly' or 'doctor' or 'professor.' "

"Well, fer cryin' out loud, ain't that what I called him? Oh, I see. I was friendly like and called him 'doc' and 'prof.' Well, if he objects, it's all right with me, can't hurt my feelings, I'm for him strong. Peppery old guy, though, ain't he?" he concluded admiringly.

The old man returned and began, "I shall use as few technical terms as possible, so that you two," nodding toward Jimmy and Connors, "may understand.

"There are two kinds of fractures of the skull, generally known as bending fractures and bursting fractures. The bending fractures occur directly at the area where the skull was struck, or in parallel circles around that area.

"The bursting fracture has a tendency to extend from the point where the skull was struck to the opposite side of the skull. This is most frequently the case where the base of the skull is involved, such as in Dr. Manx's case. This distinction often helps us in determining the kind of injury. The reason the bursting fracture most frequently involves the base of the skull is because that part of the skull is thickest

and is less elastic than other parts. Thus a blow struck at that point may cause a fracture in the front of the skull.

"That happened in this case. The entire base of the skull was caved in and the two orbital plates were fractured. The orbital plates are two thin bones running horizontally above the eyes and form practically the roof of the orbital cavities." *

"Might not those frontal fractures have been caused by the impact with which the face was brought in contact with the desk?" asked Jimmy.

"No, there was nothing to show that the face was brought into contact with the desk in spite of the force of the impact. Besides, that kind of fracture in front of the skull is a characteristic feature when the base of the skull is struck with great force.

"The nature of the wound seems to indicate that Dr. Manx received a blow with a large, blunt instrument with more or less regular borders. A large stone, with a square end, might

* One of the most prominent cases of this kind is the one in which the two orbital plates of the skull were fractured, following the gunshot injury to the base of the skull, in the case of the murder of Abraham Lincoln.

have caused that injury; a sledge hammer might have caused it. All we can be certain of is the approximate size of the weapon that caused death. Now you, Mr. Hale, and you, Mr. Connors, were there at the time it happened. Each of you please tell me just what occurred. Tell me in your own way. You will not tell it alike, of course. No two human beings see the same thing in the same way. Tell it."

Jimmy's tale was characteristic of the good reporter. The story was told quickly. All the essential details had photographed themselves on his memory and they were related in terse, short sentences, told in a way that might have served as a model for the ideal newspaper story. Connors' summary was more verbose, told subjectively, whereas the other's was objective. Connors went into great detail as to what he saw, thought, said and did. He was flattered by the rapt attention with which the professor followed his story. He did not know that in the professor he had perhaps the best listener he was ever destined to meet.

Throughout both narratives the old man sat like a graven image. He gave one the impres-

sion that he absorbed every word like a sponge, that not a syllable escaped him. Indeed, twice during each recital, he interrupted to point out an apparent slight discrepancy in their respective statements. When they had finished, he sat for a long time in deep thought. Then he asked Connors, "Have you had an opportunity yet of examining the occupants of the house?"

"Examine 'em! They treated me like a doormat when I was there with Mr. Hale and Mr. Harmon. But I'm goin' there from here and ask a lot of questions and, believe me, them questions will be answered. I treated 'em nice an' gentle the first time. If they don't treat me the same, I'll show 'em where to get off. I know my duty and I'm gonna do it."

"You know, Mr. Connors, I have recently taken more than a casual interest in the science of criminology. It is an interesting and fascinating science. Would you mind if I went along with you, just as a spectator, mind you, and watched the preliminary examination?"

"Not at all, come along, glad to have you. We'll show you that we ain't such hicks even if we ain't from New York."

Matthews and Jimmy were careful not to have the old man catch their grins at his statement concerning his interest in criminology. The trip was made quickly and Connors at once took truculent command of the situation.

CHAPTER VI

AFTER a curt nod to the uniformed man on the lawn and the plain clothes man in the hall, Connors rudely brushed the maid aside and led the way for the others to what had been the doctor's consulting room. Here he pointed out for the professor's benefit striking physical characteristics of the vivid scene, calling attention to the sash, to which some fragments of glass still adhered. Then he looked out into the hall and ordered the man stationed there to bring the boy in.

"Which boy, Con? There are two of 'em."

"Two of 'em?"

"Yeah, one is about seven and the other about twelve or thirteen."

"Oh, I see; bring the bigger one."

The boy was shoved into the room, and Connors turned to him.

"Now, sonny, nobody's gonna hurt ya. I just wanna ask you some questions. I'm a detective, see?" pulling the lapel of his coat aside to show the badge. "I'm chief detective of the

county. Now, we wanna know something about what happened here. You was in the yard and you look like a bright boy.

"Now, sonny, what was you doin' in the yard?"

"Nothin'. I was just lookin' at the river." From each side of the yard, where the garage did not obstruct the view, there was a full view of the sweeping majesty of the Hudson.

"You was doin' nothin' at all?"

"No, mister, honest. I was just pitchin' stones down the gully there." He pointed to the chasm at the right.

"Sure you wasn't tossin' stones this way?"

"No, I wasn't."

"Did you see me in the room, here, from the yard, before—er—before the window was broke?"

"Yes, sir, I saw you and him," pointing to Jimmy, "and another man."

"That's right. I saw you looking toward the house when we was going out. Did you see us go out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you look away from the house between then and the time the window was broke?"

"No, sir. I was just goin' in then."

"Was you lookin' this way when the window was broke?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' did you see it?"

"Well, I don't know if I was exactly lookin' this way or not."

"Wadda you mean?"

"Well, I was comin' this way, but I don't know if I was exactly lookin' at the house. A feller don't always look ahead of him when he's walking, does he?"

"Well, did you see the breakin' of the window?"

"I don't know just what I saw. I saw *somepin*, heard the noise and saw the hole. Then I come runnin'."

"Did you see someone else in the yard?"

"No, sir."

"Sure?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see a stone or somethin' outside the window after the crash?"

"No, sir."

Connors turned in perplexed exasperation toward the others.

"Now, what do you know about that?"

The old man's stare had been fixed all this time on the boy. He nodded comprehendingly at Connors. Then he turned to the boy.

"Was the entire family at home then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who are they all?"

"Well, there was dad, mother, Bob, Alice, Dave, that's my sister Cora's husband, you know; Cora and their baby, and Frank, my little brother."

"And do you know where they all were when this happened?"

"No, sir, I don't know where anybody was except dad. I saw him right there in that chair."

"The servants live in the garage, do they not?"

"You mean Mrs. Petersen and them?"

"Yes."

"No, sir. Max the chauffeur and Pete the gardener live in the garage. Mrs. Petersen and Adele live in the house."

"Was anyone in the garage when this happened?"

"Yeah, Max was there fixin' up one of the cars."

"While you were out in the yard tossing stones down there, did you see Max in the yard? Did he go out of the garage or did he look out?"

"Yes, sir. He was out in the yard a few times. You see, half the car was in the yard and half in the garage. There was somepin the matter with the rear of the car."

"Do you like Max, son?"

"I used to. He used to make me things, but not any more."

"Where are their rooms, the rooms where Max and Pete sleep?"

"They're in back, upstairs. The front is like a loft; we use it for puttin' things away."

"Do you ever go up to their rooms?"

"Not to Max's room. He keeps his door locked and because I don't like him, I go up to Pete's room. He's all right."

"Just when this thing happened to the window, did you see Max outside of the garage?"

"No, sir."

"Did he come running with you toward the house when the crash came?"

"No, sir."

The old man looked at Connors and Jimmy for verification of this. Both nodded.

"Did he come afterward?"

"I don't know." Once more the old man looked toward Jimmy and Connors. They shrugged.

"How far from the garage were you when the crash came?"

"Not far, just a little way. I was coming toward the house." The boy had lost his diffidence by this time and was speaking with greater confidence and with a total lack of self-consciousness.

"Did you hear the crash distinctly?"

"Yes, sir."

"If you had been in the garage, could you have heard it?"

"Yes, sir. It was a loud crash."

"Is Max around somewhere?"

"Yes, sir, he's out front."

"All right, Harry. I'll talk to you again sometime."

Connors ordered the lesser detective on watch in the hall to get the chauffeur.

Max came in minus his uniform, wiping his

hands on a piece of waste. He had been in the front driveway, he explained, making a minor adjustment on one of the cars.

"You the chauffeur?" Connors fired at him.

He nodded.

"What's your name?"

"Max Schiller."

"Where was you when this thing happened?"

"Which thing?"

Connors' head shot forward belligerently, his chin thrust outward.

"Now, don't get gay, feller. I know how to make guys like you talk."

"I'm not getting gay. There are a lot of things happening in this house lately. Just which thing do you mean?"

Connors glared at him for a moment.

"I mean when Dr. Manx was killed."

"I was in the garage."

"What part of the garage?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, was you in your room upstairs or was you downstairs where the cars are?"

"I'm not sure. I was working on one of the cars right in the doorway there. I was in and

out all around the car, front and rear, and I went up to my room once or twice."

"When did you find out that something had happened?"

"I was coming outside to go toward the rear of the car when I saw someone." He hesitated, looking at Connors more sharply. "It was you, or someone who looked like you, crawling out of the window. Then I noticed that the window was broken and I knew something happened."

"Did you hear the crash of the breaking glass?"

"No. First I knew something happened was when I saw you or some other man climb out of the window."

"How long before that did you go up to your room?"

"Oh, about fifteen minutes or so."

"Then you must have been right there downstairs in the garage when the window was broken." Max shrugged.

"I don't know when it was broken."

"And you mean to tell me that you didn't hear the crash?"

For the first time the man showed some resentment. His more or less careful diction dropped from him.

"I'm telling you, ain't I? I'm telling you just what I know. I'm answering your questions. I'm telling what happened, how it happened and when it happened, so far as I know. What more can I do?"

Connors glowered at him.

"You was right there near the open door of the garage. There was a crash, a crash that could 'a' been heard six or seven hundred feet. I heard it and I know how loud it was, an' you didn't hear it."

Max made no answer to this.

"While you was tinkering with the car, did you run the motor?"

"I was running it off and on."

"Is it a noisy motor?"

"No motor I run is noisy."

"When you ran the motor, did you run it fast?"

"It was racing and idling, off and on."

"Just before you saw me climb out of the window, was the motor running?"

"I don't remember."

"Oh, you don't remember, huh?"

"I'm telling you."

"Oh, you're telling me, huh?"

"I'm telling you."

Connors was speechless for a minute.

"Take the car you was workin' on when this happened and put it in the same position you had it then."

"I take my orders only from the house."

Once more Connors' chin jutted toward the other. "Lissen, feller, do you see this?" he displayed his badge. "And these?" He took from his hip pocket a pair of shiny handcuffs and jingled them.

"You're takin' your orders from me just now, see? This is a murder case. And I go the limit in such a case, see? Now, whadda you gonna do? Do you do what I say or do we take a ride to Hackensack? I'm reasonable, feller, but don't get on my wrong side."

Max walked out, accompanied by the three men. He backed one of the cars half out of the garage and turned sullenly toward the detective.

"Start the motor," Connors ordered.

The motor was started and the quiet purr of

the mechanism attested to the excellent care that the car had in Max's keeping.

"Now make it go faster."

The hum took on a deeper, heavier tone, but at no time was the noise such that it would drown out the crash of breaking glass that two of the men present remembered so distinctly.

"An' you mean to say," barked Connors, "that even with this motor running fast you couldn't hear the crash?"

Max shrugged again, doggedly. At this point Professor Brierly broke in:

"Mr. Schiller, what was your work before you were a chauffeur, or were you always a chauffeur?"

Max looked at the old man in surprise, but he answered respectfully:

"I was a toolmaker, sir, and I landed in the repair business, the automobile repair business. I had a little place of my own, but the war made it hard for persons with my name and slight accent. So I became a chauffeur. I like motors and since I got this job I have been satisfied. Dr. Manx was a good employer."

"You see, Mr. Schiller, this is a very distressing case and it appears that you and the

boy were the only persons in a position to have seen what happened. The boy insists that he saw nothing and now you say that not only did you not see anything but you did not even hear the crash of the breaking window. Is not that rather strange?"

The man looked at the professor keenly for a moment, then his mood appeared to soften.

"Well, it would be strange ordinarily, but some mighty strange things have been happening to that window lately, anyway. After those things, nothing that could happen to that window would surprise me."

Simultaneously, the old man and Connors asked:

"What do you mean—strange things happening to that window?"

"Well, in the past month, that window has been broken about half a dozen times, but broken in the strangest way."

"What do you mean?"

"Come into that room and I'll show you."

The group once more traversed the back yard. When they were in the room, Schiller explained:

"You see, these windows have the old-fash-

ioned folding shutters that fold back on themselves in two sections each. There are two upper sections and two lower sections. Several times in the last month the doctor called me in to fix this window. Each time the lower pane was broken. There would be nothing especially odd in that, but a couple of times the lower window was badly broken, the upper window was cracked and there was a hole torn right through the center of the shutters. Each of these times the maid Adele was sure that she had left the lower window up and the upper half of the shutters closed. That's the way these shutters usually were anyway. The doctor liked them that way. He did not like too much glare. The reason I knew about it was because I used to do odd jobs around the house. Now doesn't it seem that this was done from inside?"

There was now a look of eager inquiry in the professor's eyes. "Will you please go over that again, Mr. Schiller?"

The chauffeur repeated carefully what he had just told them of the broken windows. When he had concluded, the professor was

thoughtful for a moment, and then asked: "I see no signs of it now—how is that?"

"I repaired it. You can see the new paint."

"It is your opinion, therefore, that since there was a hole through the shutter and the lower window was quite broken and the upper just cracked, that some missile or implement was used from inside? That such an object was used in such a way that it broke through the shutters, broke the lower window (which was thrown up) and had its force sufficiently arrested to just crack the outer window? Is that your idea, Mr. Schiller?"

The chauffeur nodded.

"Is it your opinion that this was done by a missile, by something thrown, or by an implement, such as a hammer, for instance?"

"A mi—er—I think something was thrown."

"Do you think you could do that, Mr. Schiller?"

"Do you mean do I think I could throw something from the room here and do the same kind of damage that was done before?"

"Yes."

"I think I could."

"Will you hunt up a stone or something and see if you can do it?"

The innate desire in every human male to throw was now uppermost in Max, as he eagerly consented. He came back in a trice with a stone somewhat smaller than a baseball.

"Where shall I stand?" he asked the professor.

"Anywhere."

Stationing himself about twelve feet from the window, the chauffeur threw the stone with all his might at the closed upper shutters. The stone bounded off. Beyond a slight splintering, the stone did no damage.

"Let me try," urged Matthews. The old man consented.

Matthews took the wind-up of the trained pitcher. His aim was good. He hit the two upright posts of the joined shutters. These splintered badly, but did no further damage. The young man grinned. The professor picked up the stone and joggled it up and down, as if judging its weight. Then he asked:

"John, do you think you could do any better with a heavier object?"

"I couldn't get much speed with a heavier missile, professor."

The old man now turned to the chauffeur.

"I once heard a friend of this young man say to someone that only a person by the name of Walter Johnson had what he called 'more smoke' than John Matthews. He was talking about baseball. I gathered that he meant by 'smoke' the velocity with which he could hurl a baseball and that this person Johnson is a person of some prominence, who can hurl a baseball with considerable velocity. Why a person should attain prominence for such a perfectly useless accomplishment is something I cannot comprehend. At any rate, a lighter missile than this would not be heavy enough to do much damage and you selected this stone because you instinctively felt that with this you could do your best. You are probably right. Tests have proven that our instincts in such matters are usually to be relied upon, especially in the case of a man who is accustomed to handling tools. Now do you still believe that this window was damaged by an object thrown from inside the room?"

"No, I guess not, sir."

"Who else besides yourself knew of these broken windows? Who called your attention to them?"

"Dr. Manx."

"And Dr. Manx is dead," drily. "Who else?"

"Adele."

"No one else?"

"No one I know of."

"Was there any missile or implement, that might have done the damage, found at any time?"

"Not that I know of."

"Who called your attention to the breakages?"

"Adele a few times, the doctor the other times."

"Now, on this occasion when the doctor was killed, did you see anyone in the yard?"

"I saw Harry."

"No one else?"

"No."

"Did you speak of these broken windows to anyone?"

"I might have mentioned them to a couple of people; it struck me as so queer."

"To persons in the house?"

"No, to some friends of mine outside."

"Did Adele speak of it to anyone?"

"Adele never spoke to anyone in the house much—except young Conrad, that's the young man who died of meningitis."

The professor nodded, as if in dismissal, and Schiller, glancing inquiringly at Connors, received a shake of the head in reply. He left the room.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER a short pause, the professor seated himself in the chair but lately occupied by Dr. Manx and, addressing the others as though he were in a classroom conducting a class, he began:

"I feel somewhat like a charlatan staging this demonstration of stone throwing, because it is so theatrical, but there is some justification. It helped to show you what I knew before I came here. I knew after the autopsy that the instrument that dispatched Dr. Manx could not have been a missile thrown by any human being, to say nothing of a boy. The base of the skull is very difficult to fracture. It is dense, proportionately inelastic, and very thick. In this case, the entire base of the skull was stove in and the force of the impact was so great that it caused, as I told you, fracture of the bones on the opposite side of the skull. This particular injury, technically called fracture by 'contre coup' is rarely caused by an impact much less in degree than a gunshot wound.

At any rate, the force of the blow must be considerable to cause that kind of injury. I knew before I came to this house that no human being could have thrown an object sufficiently heavy, with sufficient velocity, to cause that injury. I am repeating this because I wish to make one thing clear. I cannot emphasize it too strongly. Please remember, therefore: Dr. Manx's wound was the result of a blow that could not have been delivered by anything that any human being could throw with sufficient velocity.

"The reason I staged this silly demonstration was because it is difficult for the lay mind to accept a scientific fact. You are all satisfied now that the agency that caused the damage to the shutter of which the chauffeur spoke was *not* caused by anything thrown.

"If we assume, therefore, that the agency that caused Dr. Manx's death is the agency that broke the windows and shutter, we shall have to seek for something other than a missile that can be thrown by the hand, and for someone who used means other than throwing such an object."

"How about a club or sledge hammer, professor?" asked Connors.

"A club or sledge hammer could do it, but that would have to be under very special conditions. Dr. Manx, you say, was sitting where I am sitting now. He was taller than I and he was leaning forward slightly when you last saw him alive. Is that correct?"

Connors and Jimmy nodded affirmatively.

"His head was, roughly, about eighteen inches from the window. Assuming that this was done from outside, do you not see the difficulty a person would have in striking just that blow from the yard? The autopsy showed that the direction of the force was from straight behind. Put yourself in a position to strike a horizontal blow at a point that is at least two feet to your left, assuming that you are a right-handed person.

"I have taken one lesson in golf and was told that the furthest forward that a ball may rest and be struck to the greatest advantage, is off the left heel. Most baseballs, I believe, are struck when they are parallel to the striker or batter, as John says.

"The only way you could strike a very forc-

ible blow at an object so far in front of you, is to strike downward. But the autopsy shows, as I said, that the direction of the implement, missile or projectile was almost horizontal, and slightly upward. The weapon came from behind and slightly below the head.

"Another difficulty about this is, that if we assume that the agency that caused Dr. Manx's death was the same that was doing tricks with the shutters and windows, then it was done from within the room, or so it seems. And you gentlemen all assert that this blow came almost as soon as you closed the door.

"Then the assailant, if it was done directly and not by some indirect means, must have been in the room. Where could he have hidden while you were here? By the way, was there a fire in the fireplace?"

Jimmy and Connors nodded.

"Then—" he spread his hands wide in an expressive gesture.

After a brief pause, he jumped up with his characteristically quick, nervous movements.

"There is one more thing in this connection before we go on to another phase of the problem. It is something on which Mr. Connors

laid great stress. I have an idea. Let us clear that up before we go further. Come along with me, if you will. Get the chauffeur to the garage, Mr. Connors, please?"

When they were all assembled in the garage, the old man once more requested the chauffeur to start the motor of one of the cars. When it was running, he asked him a number of trivial questions about the mechanism. This drew the chauffeur out, who immediately thawed, now that he was permitted to expound his pet hobby. Professor Brierly listened patiently to his explanation of the exhaust. At the end, Professor Brierly asked:

"Often I see men bend down to listen to the motor, with their ear close to it. What can they hear, Mr. Schiller?" Matthews was the only one present who was surprised at the question. He knew that his mentor knew motors, theoretically and practically, as few men knew them; this was particularly true of internal combustion motors.

"Why, we can hear a lot of things, sir. A man with a good ear can pick out the tappets, for instance, that need adjustment, or he can—" The rest of what he was saying was

muffled because he now had his right ear close to the motor block, demonstrating how one listens for the various sounds that mean so much to the motor-wise.

While he had his head in that position, Professor Brierly said distinctly, in an ordinary conversational tone, at the same time watching the chauffeur closely:

"Mr. Connors, Max Schiller is guilty of the murder of Dr. Manx. You may arrest him."

The chauffeur's expression did not change by the twitch of a muscle; he went on talking, still moving his head from one place to another beside the motor block. Connors' mouth opened in astonishment, but only for a moment. His hand swept backward toward his pocket and he was advancing on the chauffeur, circling the hood of the car to get at his man, when the professor stopped him.

"Never mind, Mr. Connors. I was just testing him. He is quite deaf in his left ear. He did not hear a word I said, with his good ear to the motor, and I am quite certain he did not hear the crash of the breaking window while his head was in that position."

Connors' face became suffused with sudden

anger. This disappeared in a flash. He smiled with instant and sincere cordiality and looked again at the chauffeur, who was now standing erect and still talking unsuspectingly to the professor. Then Connors turned admiringly to the old man.

"Say, prof—er, professor, I'm for you all the way from the ace. Put it there," he held out his paw and engulfed the old man's tiny hand.

"How didja ever guess it?"

"Purely elementary," asserted the professor, as they walked back toward the house. "A man of Schiller's intelligence would not tell a story that was so obviously improbable unless it were the truth. I am prepared to believe that he is lying if he tells something that sounds plausible and true. But when a man tells something that is as much like a lie as the statement that he did not hear the crash from the floor of the garage, then he must be telling the truth.

"I asked him, if you remember, what his trade had been. He had been a toolmaker. That trade would qualify him for contriving an apparatus that would propel a projectile of sufficient weight and with enough velocity to cave in the base of Dr. Manx's skull. That

made him a suspect. But if we verify what he said about the broken windows and shutters, that removes suspicion from him, provided it is proven that both were caused by the same agency.

"Now let us check up on the broken shutters and windows."

He stood up and peered intently at the upper shutters and at the windows, both upper and lower. After this, he carefully examined the lower edges of each sash. Here he found some slight abrasions and scratches to which he seemed to pay a great deal of attention. Then he went to one of the windows facing the driveway. After making several trips from these windows to the one that had been broken, he once more scrutinized the scratches on the lower edges of the window frames. Then he turned to the others.

"Some repairs do seem to have been made on the shutters and the putty on these windows is undoubtedly newer than that on the side window. Now let us see how many persons in this house knew of these odd occurrences and what their reactions are."

When the maid, Adele Le Moyne, was

brought in, her eyes were red with recent weeping. Connors took up the examination.

"Max tells us something about broken windows and shutters here. He says that you know something about it."

"Max would."

"Well, what about it?"

"I came in here one morning to clean up and found the shutters cracked. I told Max about it and he repaired them. A little while later I came in and found a hole in the shutters and both windows broken. I told him about it again."

"Was Max surprised?"

"That Dutchman is never surprised at anything," Adele gave vent to a sniff. "If he is, you couldn't tell it from his wooden face, anyhow. He just grunted in his high-hat way and fixed it, that's all."

"Just how were the windows broken?"

"Both windows were not broken, except twice. When they were both broken, once the lower window was altogether smashed and the upper just cracked; another time, they were both broken. Once the lower was just cracked —that's all."

"Was the lower window raised those times?"

"The lower was raised all the time, except when the doctor was in the room. The doctor liked to have this room and the other rooms airy and fresh all the time."

"It was closed the day we were here."

"Sure it was, it was a cold day. I made a fire in the room that day."

"What did the doctor say about these broken windows?"

"He didn't know about it in the beginning. He was away at a medical convention. It happened only once while he was here."

"What did he say about it then?"

"I don't remember."

"When was this?"

"About two days before Con—Mr. Manx was taken sick." She brought her handkerchief to her lips and tried to control the convulsive sob that was interfering with her speech.

Jimmy remembered vividly her demonstration of grief at the funeral, and the sardonic look cast in her direction by the dead man's younger brother.

"Do you think maybe this could happen without your knowing about it?"

"I don't know; I guess so."

"So you are not sure that this happened only once since the doctor came back?" The old man was looking his approval at this line of questioning.

"No, I'm not sure, but I'm in this room every day and around the house all the time. It seems as if such a thing could not happen without my knowing it."

"Who else, besides yourself, the doctor, and Max knew about it?"

"Why, I don't know. I don't know why everybody in the house couldn't know about it. It wasn't kept a secret from anybody that I know of."

Connors looked inquiringly at Professor Brierly, who shook his head. The detective dismissed the maid.

CHAPTER VIII

"I SHOULD like to hear what Mrs. Manx has to say," suggested the professor.

"Right, but I guess we'll have to go up to her room. She's an invalid, you know, and mebbe she ain't feelin' so good now."

The maid came down shortly and announced that her mistress expressed a willingness to come downstairs. The men, interpreting it each in his own way, took this to mean that she did not care to have them trooping up to her room. The maid held the door open for her as she propelled her rubber-tired chair into the room. She came to rest before the men with the light from the window streaming full on her face. She bowed with grave courtesy and waited.

A strangely beautiful woman. Underneath the somber mask, which was probably the result of her recent loss and long-standing infirmity, one felt there was life and light and youth struggling for expression. There were no signs of recent grief on her features. She was a

woman who expressed great poise and character. She was dressed in a simple dress of black, the only incongruous note being the fact that her skirt reached down to her shoe-tops, thus concealing her atrophied limbs.

"Mrs. Manx," said Connors, speaking as gently as he could, "where was you when—when the doctor was hit?"

"I was in my room."

"Where is that?"

"In the rear, right above this one."

"Was anybody with you?"

"No, the maid had left me a short time before that. I had her there to bring me a book from below stairs."

"What was you doin' at the time?"

"I was just about to lie down. Oh," answering the unspoken thought in their minds, "I can help myself quite well. I have very strong hands, you see, and the arms of this chair are adjustable, almost like a dentist's; you see—they swing down." With a touch on a lever, she caused both arms of the chair to drop down until they were parallel to and on a plane with the chair. Her tone had grown whimsical as she demonstrated the chair and spoke of the

strength of her hands. The quaint tone and simple way in which she made her statement was far more pathetic than any outward and outright show of grief might have been.

"Did you hear the window break?"

"Yes."

"Did you look outa the back window, just before this happened?"

"Yes."

"What did you see in the yard?"

"Harry was there, pitching stones into the gully, and I think I saw Max working on a car in the doorway of the garage."

"Was this just before you heard the window break?"

"Well, a short time before, perhaps two or three minutes."

"Are you sure there was nobody else in the yard?"

"I didn't see anybody else."

"What did you do then?"

"I waited a minute and then I heard a sort of scuffling in the yard. Right after that there was a disturbance downstairs that made me believe something had happened. I rang for the maid. I rang several times before she answered.

When she told me what had happened, I was going to go downstairs. Just then Robert came up and he insisted that I stay in my room. He did not let me go down. When I promised that I would not, he went back. Adele stayed a few minutes."

"Mrs. Manx, Max and Adele tell us that the windows and shutters in this room was broke a number of times in the past month. Do you know anything about it?"

She shook her head.

"Well, Max and Adele both says that it happened mebbe five, six times. It all happened in the last month. I thought you could tell us something about it."

"Oh, I believe I do remember coming in here one day and seeing Max at work on one of the windows. That must have been it."

"Well, this happened a few times."

"Not much of the house gossip comes to me, you know," with a whimsical smile. "Unless I am directly concerned—"

"So you know nothing about those broken windows?"

She shook her head slowly.

"You never heard 'em break from your room?"

"I spend very little time in my room. Whenever the weather permits I stay on the roof. The lift goes through my room from the roof down to the basement. And"—she mused a moment—"domestics will exaggerate such things sometimes, you know."

Throughout the interview, her sobriety had not broken for an instant, except at the beginning, when she explained amusedly that she could get into and out of bed unassisted. One hand had rested on the arm of her chair and the other in her lap. Her somber dress, surmounted by the bright face illuminated by the light from the window, made her look like a picture, against the dark background of the room. There was no visible sign of grief. There was no sign of grief repressed. There was nothing. That there was an inward disturbance was apparent, but it was the disturbance of long custom. She looked at the men calmly and at all times there was perfect poise.

When the men left her, Jimmy felt that they had intruded on one at prayer, at a shrine. He

was not sufficiently hardened to be callous at such moments. When, because of professional duties, he was forced to invade such privacy, he always felt slightly abashed. Perhaps that is what made him such an excellent reporter. He could, on occasion, describe human feeling and passion with a great deal of delicacy and finesse.

When they reached the doctor's study, Connors said, "Don't seem to get us anywhere, does it?"

He looked at the other men with an air of indecision that was very unlike his cocksure self. In his bewilderment, he was driven to vent his sarcasm on the old man.

"Don't seem to be much good being a scientific detective in this case, does it?"

"I'm not a detective, sir," retorted the old man coldly. "I am a scientist. I do not form snap judgments nor jump to conclusions. Nor do I make guesses. I must prove whatever conclusions I come to, step by step, in the only way that is worth considering—the scientific way. When I have examined all the available data, I shall know the answer, not sooner. I do not perform miracles."

"Oh, sure, sure," soothed Connors. "But just look what we got here. A note comes to an editor sayin' that a certain person would die of a certain disease. Seems like boloney to me. The editor done what I would have done with the note. He chucks it in the wastebasket. Then the person dies of the disease. Right?

"Then along comes another note sayin' another Manx would be number two, in Jewish, and before you can look around this other bird is knocked off. Then we ask a lot of questions and what do we get? Nothin'! One guy who maybe could tell us something, is deef. Right? He seems to have a grudge agin' the maid, maybe because she don't fall for him and he tries to make us believe the maid knows something. Right?

"The maid ain't deef, but she acts dumb. She's got a grudge agin' this feller, mebbe because he don't fall for *her*, or something, and she don't know nothin' either. Mebbe for all we know, they know something we want to know. They both tell us something about the broken shutters and windows. If we're to believe this, then we must believe that this was maybe done from inside, that is, if one thing

is got something to do with the other thing. I mean the broken windows with the killing of Dr. Manx. Mrs. Manx ain't sure about the breakin' windows and shutters. Mebbe she's got the right dope about Max and Adele when she says that such people sometimes put it on thick, when they want to look bigger than they are. I seen such things lots of times. Still, you can't tell. Mebbe what they say is on the level.

"But if it was done from inside, why in hell was the window broke when he was killed, unless it bounced off his head after it hit him and then hit the window? And whether it was done from inside or outside, where is the thing it was done with?

"There is one thing sure. If it was the old days, and if I had my way, I'd have the whole bunch down to the county courthouse and I'd sweat the inside of this out of somebody. But you can't do that now. The minute we put someone in the sweat-box and give him the works, some ladida is sure to make a holler about 'rights.'

"Rights! What rights is the poor guy got what was croaked? There is so many leagues

and societies about rights and liberties and such that you can't ask a yegg or a stick-up man a simple question without the lawyers of them societies bein' on your neck, and the judges falls for them too. Aw!"

He snorted in disgust and continued heatedly:

"Here's two people dead. We know, or at least we think, they was killed. We asked a lot of questions and where are we? Nowhere. Right? And s'pose there's another note and a couple more people gets killed, might as well be a lawyer for all the good I can do, with leagues and societies and rights and things.

"Well, we might's well call it a day. There'll be the inquest and if the verdict is what I think, then we may go and get something.

"Now, don't get me wrong, professor. I know you done some wonderful work in the past and you sure spotted that guy's deefness in great style. You sure explain things wonderful. But action is what I want and, by God! action is what I'm goin' to get. Let's quit for today. Mebbe there's some reports on this at the office. I'm leaving a coupla men

here and they won't get away," waving his hand to include the entire house.

The following day brought a remarkable aftermath to this strange affair. Every metropolitan newspaper and several of the local papers began to receive letters foretelling death for some member of the Manx family. In each case the numeral 3 was represented by a letter of some alphabet. If it was not a letter of the alphabet, it was a character or a sign that was known to stand for the numeral 3. And the diseases by which death was prophesied were almost as great in number as the threatening letters.

The reaction of the editors on the city papers to these notes was remarkably similar. Each thought, upon receipt of the first note, that he had a fine addition to what was already one of the biggest stories in his life. But they all quickly realized that this was but the expression of a well-known form of morbid hysteria.

Among the languages and characters represented were Greek, Chinese, Russian, Sanskrit, Aramaic, Persian, Arabic, Tibetan, Egyptian, Phœnician, Cyrillic and several Indian alphabets. There were also included hieroglyphics

and cuneiform characters and runes of more or less authenticity, and several that existed nowhere but in the imagination of their authors.

While everyone was aware that all this was in effect, if not in fact, a morbid practical joke, the continuous stream of missives caused many serious-minded persons great concern and the police became very active, especially in those zones where the notes were postmarked. It was patent that underneath it all there was a grave threat. Of course all the notes that had the numeral 3 expressed in the Hebrew character ג (GIMMEL), were carefully scanned.

After a few days, the stream of notes became less heavy and finally died down to a thin trickle. This was particularly evident when the professional humorists took the matter in hand. When with the national inclination to look at the brighter side of things, the matter became a theme for columnists, comic strip artists, cartoonists and inspired quips on film and stage, the number of notes quickly dwindled. Because even the mildly neurotic hypochondriac is not proof against the funny dart.

Beneath the surface of all this, however, was a real horror. Thinking men and women and

those who had the investigation in charge, did not let these happenings make them forget for one moment that any of those notes might be the harbinger of death for someone. It might be death for some member of the Manx family, or someone else. The uncertainty added to the horror. It might be sudden, violent death, or conventional dying by some disease. Many felt the dread stalking in their midst, with all the known modern methods of prevention powerless to help them.

Neither the authorities nor the editors showed any particular concern over the flood of notes, and for one reason: by some unaccountable oversight, Jimmy had neglected to mention in his first story two of the major characteristics of the two bona fide notes, namely, that they were printed out of letters cut from a newspaper and the Hebrew characters were tracings. While the photographed reproduction of the second note showed the erratic character of the printing, it did not show how these letters were made.

Subsequently, Hite decided to keep this knowledge from becoming public property. In this way only was he able to tell whether the

notes he received were the result of insane practical jokers or not. He shared this knowledge with the authorities of Bergen County and the editors of other newspapers, under a pledge of secrecy.

CHAPTER IX

THE authorities under whose jurisdiction the Manx deaths had occurred displayed great activity. But it was activity, nothing else. There was neither plan nor method in it. Everyone who was interested in the matter waited with great anxiety for the result of the inquest.

Under the insistent demands of Connors, the coroner subpœnaed every member of the Manx household for examination at the inquest. But the coroner was at sea. He appeared not to know what to ask nor of whom to ask it. He got a complete and detailed account of the nature of the injury from the county physician.

The only persons who were able to give him a somewhat coherent account of the manner of death of Dr. Manx, were Harmon, Connors and Jimmy. Their account, however, did not help much toward a solution of the mystery. They recounted their conversation with the doctor, their leaving him and the crash, the momentary glimpse of the running boy. That was all. At

this point everyone seemed to face a blank wall.

Under Connors' coaching, the coroner asked each member of the family what he knew of the broken shutters and windows. It appeared from what they all said that every member of the household, from Mrs. Manx down to her six-year-old boy, with the exception of the older youngster, Harry, knew of the matter. Harry, under a sustained fire of cross-examination, insisted that he did not know anything of the matter and had not heard of it until he heard some of the witnesses at the inquest speak of it.

While their accounts were all substantially alike, they differed widely about one phase of the matter. Their testimony varied as to the doctor's knowledge of the breakages, and the time of their occurrence.

Connors had got over his pique and went at the examination with his usual directness and insistence. Under his supervision, the coroner used every means at his command to fix the time of the several window breakings, especially with reference to the question as to whether Dr. Manx knew of these, and if they did not all happen while he was away. Connors once more, under the influence of the pro-

fessor's personality, was convinced that in this line of questioning, and the old man's reaction to this phase of the matter, lay an important link in the chain he was trying to forge. Unlike most murder mysteries, he had here a problem that does not often confront the investigator. In most cases at least the method of killing is clear. The chief and often the only problem of the detective is to find the perpetrator of the act.

In this case, the method was as obscure as the name of the person or persons responsible. If Connors had not himself been present with Jimmy and Harmon when the crime was committed, he would have scoffed at a great deal of the testimony offered during the inquest and the earlier accounts that he had himself elicited from various persons. He laboriously and painfully checked up what he now knew of the affair. At the end of this unaccustomed mental exercise, he was left with a dizzy feeling, as though he were treading on thin air.

There was the first note, followed by the young man's death. He dismissed this from his mind for the moment. Then there was the second note, which brought Jimmy to Har-

mon's office. His visit to the Manx estate followed, with Dr. Manx's cavalier treatment of his position and authority. His departure from the consulting room, followed almost instantly by the crash of breaking glass. His sight of the boy running across the yard. The findings of the autopsy, which determined clearly that the blow had come from directly behind and slightly below. Although he was prone to take with a grain of salt most expert analyses, he was forced to accept the conclusion drawn by the professor, because it conformed so closely with what he himself knew of the matter. He remembered clearly the position in which he had left Dr. Manx, seated at his desk and bending slightly forward, with his back to the window.

He recalled sharply every detail in the room —the blazing fire in the hearth, the severe, simple furnishings. He remembered further the stacked chairs on the other side of the sliding doors, making it unthinkable that anyone had got in and out of the room during the time he and his two companions had been out of that same room. The smashed window, the position of the victim, his instant conclusion that

it had been done from the outside. He recalled vividly his instinctive search for the weapon, his dragging the boy into the room; the housekeeper; and later, the additional evidence that Max had been within sight of the window most of the time, as was the boy—the remarkable combination of circumstances that created the whole situation.

Assuming that it had been done from outside, it had to be from straight back of the window in line with the garage, or nearly so. The boy couldn't have done it. He was satisfied with the professor's demonstration that no human being, much less a boy, could have thrown an object that would have inflicted such damage. The picture of the boy running with empty hands after the crash, the equally vivid image of the boy starting toward the house just before he had left the room. Then came the facts about the shutter breakings and the window breakings—

From what source had that story first come?

From Max, the intelligent, deaf chauffeur, the good mechanic, the man handy with tools, the one person aside from the boy, as far as they knew, who was directly in line with the

window practically all of the time, the only person—

Connors jumped up ablaze with the ecstasy of discovery. With his characteristic directness, he was about to start for the Manx home with a warrant for one Max Schiller, when he remembered a number of other incidents in connection with the affair. His steps as well as his mind faltered. He saw at once, when he began to think in detail about the matter, that there were facts that would not quite jibe with this theory.

Connors itched under the pounding that his office had been receiving at the hands of the press, particularly the opposition papers in his own county. He saw sharply what would happen if he got the wrong man. The ridicule. There were two things this man could not stand —inaction and the thought of being ridiculous. He had been in office long enough and he was sufficiently acquainted with the politics of this office to know what would happen to him if he made such a serious blunder in a case that was attracting nation-wide attention.

Once more his mind veered with childlike faith to the professor. He admitted to himself

again that that individual had the uncanny faculty of being able to put his fingers on the truth, inspired by what to Connors was very vague and intangible evidence. He determined to settle one thing more and then pay another visit to the professor. He was rather mildly surprised at not having heard from him for such a long time.

Connors drove to the Manx home, and standing in the doorway of the garage, concluded that a person standing in his position would have no difficulty in seeing clearly into the room where the tragedy occurred. He saw the sliding doors and the room clearly. Max could have seen Connors and his companions leaving the room. This vision was made a little clearer when he stepped back into the garage.

Then he stationed himself where the boy had been and saw from this position that it was possible to see everything that was going on in the room. It suddenly occurred to him that the boy had never mentioned seeing his father, either before or after the crash. Here was one important point that could be verified right away. He gloated over being able to put one over on the professor.

He found the boy and asked him to repeat his story. He only half listened to the recital, not being interested in that part of it. Then he fired his question:

"When you was tossin' the stones, Harry, and you looked over toward the house, did you see your father?"

"Yes, sir, sitting at his desk."

"When you started toward the house, just as we was leavin' the room, did you see him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Just tell me how he was sittin'."

"He wasn't sittin'—he was standin'."

"What!"

"Yes, sir, he was standin'. As you were going out, he got up and turned to the window, looking out. Then I looked away for a minute and after that I heard the crash."

In his excitement, Connors seized the boy's arm.

"Are you sure, Harry?"

"Yes, sir."

Suddenly Connors, the mental Connors, slumped like a pricked balloon. There, with the boy's simple answer, went his theory as to Max.

Connors sent for Max and ordered him to fetch a tall step ladder. With this, he made an exhaustive search of the ceiling and upper parts of the walls in the room of death. The beautiful beamed ceiling did not yield any information until he came to the end of the room near the sliding doors, where one of the edges of the old beams was chipped. This looked comparatively fresh, as though recently scraped. Connors looked eagerly for evidence that something had been clamped to the beam, but he found none. The accumulated dust at that point, as on all other parts of the ceiling, remained unbroken. There was no evidence that anyone had worked on that portion of the ceiling.

Connors studied the scratched beam long and carefully. There was no fixture near that point on walls or ceiling to account for the possible carelessness of a workman. He called Max in and pointing to the scratch on the beam, asked:

"Did you ever see that before?"

"No, I did not."

"What do you think could have done it?"

Max looked at it carefully, mounted the ladder and made a still more painstaking examina-

tion, looked at every part of the ceiling near that point and admitted that he had no idea how it got there, nor what had caused it.

Connors went on with his search. He tapped the beams, seeking vaguely some spot that was less firm than the others. He did the same to the walls, listening for hollow sounds. Once more the memory of the broken shutters and windows and the professor's attitude imbued him with the idea that something mysterious had gone on in this room. He felt faintly that here was something tangible if he could grasp it.

He raised the rugs and tapped the floors. He examined carefully every article of furniture in the room. He pulled all the drawers out of the desk and examined the interior for a secret compartment. He took detailed measurements.

Last he came to the fireplace and looked soberly at the dead ashes there. He peered up the chimney, using his flashlight. He tapped the sides and at last poked idly at the ashes with the fire iron. He could hardly credit his senses when the tip of the implement rolled out of the ashes a large, smoke-blackened stone. He was about to seize it when the memory of

questions asked at many trials came to him. He called in the plain clothes man on guard in the house and showed him the position of the stone. He rolled it over gingerly and called the other's attention to the unbroken surface of black carbon that the stone presented. Then he picked it up, first showing the other his clean hands and demonstrated that his fingers left a clear mark on the carbon-covered surface.

A modicum of caution that still remained underlying all his glee at this discovery, caused him to call up the professor before he got in touch with his own office and the newspapers to inform them of the fact that he had found the stone which killed Dr. Manx. After he got the professor's house, he asked for connection with Matthews.

"Say, Mr. Matthews, will you tell Professor Brierly that I found the stone that killed Dr. Manx. It's a round stone. It was in the fireplace. A little larger than a baseball. Now I'm gonna call up the papers. They been ridin' me so and—"

"Wait a minute, old horse," interrupted Matthews. "I'll tell the old man. Hold the wire a minute."

After a short interval, Matthews' voice, in a fairly good imitation of the professor's precise accents, came over the wire.

"Professor Brierly urges Mr. Connors not to act with undue haste in the matter. Precise and accurate scientific thought shuns and abhors hasty, premature conclusions without careful, syllogistic reasoning and that—"

"Say, young feller, what the hell is this? I'm tellin' you somethin' important and here you go off and get off all this—can't you tell me in plain United States what the old man said?"

Matthews' natural voice with his own slangy diction now answered:

"All right, old thing, just keep your shirt on. The old man thinks it would be wise for him to see the stone before you do any broadcasting. Is that plain enough?"

"But lissen—"

"No, you listen to me for a minute. I've been with his nibs for a long time and I've learned that it's best to take his advice in such matters. Now you take my advice. Amble down here with that stone as soon as you can and don't say a word to anybody. Otherwise,

you may be sorry and then you can stew in your own juice for all I care. Now, I'm saying this because both the old man and I like you, see. Otherwise I'd tell you to go to hell in your own way."

The metallic click of the receiver let it be known that the blond young giant had broken the connection. Ever quick to wrath, the detective stood there with the receiver clutched in his hand. But sound common sense came to the rescue. It did not take him long to measure the young man's statement at its precise value. He wrapped the stone in a newspaper and drove to New York.

CHAPTER X

AFTER one glance at the stone which Connors triumphantly displayed, Professor Brierly shook his head emphatically.

"This is not the implement that killed Dr. Manx, Mr. Connors. There is no room for doubt at all. Here, let me show you." Stepping into an inner room, he returned with a plaster cast of what Connors recognized instantly as the head of Dr. Manx. The base of the skull was badly mutilated. Nevertheless, there was clearly indicated in the plaster the clean-cut edges of the replica of the wound. Pointing to these edges, Professor Brierly said:

"The implement that killed Dr. Manx should fit this as accurately as a shoe will fit a footprint made in snow. Perhaps not as accurately, but well enough. Although the density of the bone at this point makes it one of the least elastic bones in the body, and Dr. Manx's age decreased the elasticity still more, there is still enough elasticity left in living bone to make a clean-cut wound highly improbable

unless it be made with an implement that has sharp edges and administered with great violence.

"In spite of that, the injury here is of such a nature that it may be definitely said that this stone was not the instrument used. How and where did you find it, Mr. Connors?"

"In the fireplace, among the ashes."

"How do you account for the fact that the maid did not remove it in all this time, if it was there since Dr. Manx's death?"

"I'll have to ask her about that. I was coming down here anyway." He looked sheepish. "I got the idea a little while ago that Max was the man we wanted. But now I see I'm wrong."

"What made you fix on the chauffeur as the guilty person and what made you change your mind?"

"Well, I was sold on the idea all the time that the doctor got it while sittin' down with his back to the window. You showed me that the blow or whatever it was came from right behind. Right?

"Well, I remember seein' the kid before we left the room and I also remember him runnin'

toward the house when we came back in right after the crash. There was nothin' in his hands then. You also showed that Max was a mechanic who could 'a' made the kind of thing that could do this. Right? Max was in the garage, in the doorway, right in line with the window. He could 'a' done it. Right?

"An' I thought mebbe he was a darn good actor and wasn't as deef as you thought."

"Very good reasoning," approved the professor.

"But I remembered we never asked the kid, or he never told us, if he had seen his father in the window. So I asked him, and what do you think he said?"

Both the old man and Matthews looked at Connors inquiringly and with awakened interest.

"The kid says that just as we left the room, the doctor stood up and looked out the window—"

The old man's deeply sunken eyes lit up and he leaned forward in more concentrated attention.

"Yeah," went on the detective, flattered at the interest he was arousing. "He says that,

and that he looked away for a minute and then he hears the crash and comes runnin' toward the house."

Professor Brierly relaxed and he sat back in his chair, assuming his former position. The detective continued:

"That makes me think again about the happenings in that room; about the windows and the shutters. So I go in the room and go over it pretty good. One thing I find on the ceiling makes me think I've got a trail. There's beams and I find one of them with a fresh break, sorta. Not just a break, but mebbe a piece is chipped off the edge, like it was hit with something.

"I've got the idea that mebbe the thing was done from up there somewhere, so I go over it pretty good. Don't find anything. There's dust there, same as on other parts of the ceiling. I tap the walls, the floors, the furniture, but nothin' doin'. Then I find this rock in the fireplace."

The old man joggled the stone in his hands, as if calculating its weight. Then he handed it back to Connors.

"How far do you think you could throw this stone?"

"I see what you mean. This ain't the kind of stone a boy or man would throw. Couldn't throw it very far anyway." The professor turned to Matthews.

"What do you think, John?"

After moving the stone up and down several times, Matthews said judiciously:

"About as heavy as a sixteen-pound shot. The best that Ralph Rose could do with this with one hand was fifty-one feet in nineteen-nine. A person couldn't—"

"You *would* know that!" snapped the old man. "If you devoted your time and thought to more useful things, you might be of some value to me, to the world, and perhaps to yourself." After glaring at his protégé for a moment, he turned once more to Connors.

"Do you remember the exact location and position of that scratch you spoke about, on the ceiling?"

"Sure I do. It was on the third beam from the slidin' doors. That made it, say, about four feet from them doors."

"On what part of the beam was this scratch?"

"It wasn't a scratch exactly, professor. It

was like someone would have hit it with a hammer, see, and sorta chipped a corner off."

"Just exactly where is the location of this scratch, Mr. Connors?" the professor repeated, in a tone that to Matthews indicated unusual interest. Connors looked with mild astonishment at this unwarranted display of interest in what to him at this time was a trifle.

"It was on a corner of one of the beams, as I tell you, near the slidin' doors. It's about in the center of the room, and the scratch is on the corner facing the rear windows, away from the doors, if you know what I mean."

The professor nodded.

"I should like to see that scratch on the beam sometime tomorrow if it can be arranged; also, I should like to be there when you interview the members of the family about the other matter, the death of the young man, which you must not overlook."

"Sure, sure, be glad to take you up there. An' I wasn't forgettin' the other thing either. I jest wanted to clean this up first. What I was goin' to come here for before I found that stone, professor, was about some of this funny business, that I can't understand. You see,

when it comes to trailin' a guy, there's nobody can do that better than me. If there's any information to get, I'll get it, see; but there's things in this business stumps me." He brooded for a moment.

"What do you think of what the kid said about his father standin' up and lookin' out the window?"

"Well, what about it?"

"You said, sir, that Dr. Manx was hit from right behind?"

"And at a slight angle from below; yes, I did."

"Then if the kid was right and he was standin' up lookin' out the window, don't that show that whatever it was that hit him came from inside?"

"Not necessarily; in the first place, the boy might be mistaken."

"Aw, professor, how could he be mistaken?"

"Mr. Connors, you have witnessed enough trials to have observed, surely, that two persons will often relate the same incident, two honest persons, I mean, and each will tell an entirely different story."

"Aw, that's different—most everybody in court lies."

He said this with such a vast simplicity, with such an utter lack of cynicism or sarcasm that Matthews roared and even the imperturbable professor smiled slightly.

"That cannot be true, Mr. Connors. I could convince you in a minute that you could be deceived even as to the evidence of your own senses, but that is beside the mark. I am trying to prove that it was impossible for Dr. Manx to have been standing in the position you describe when he was killed. You said, I believe, that you hesitated outside the door for a short interval when you, Mr. Hale and Mr. Harmon stepped out, before you heard the crash."

"Yeah, we stopped a minute and looked at each other, wonderin' what we was goin' to do."

"That's correct. Now, will you please assume that you and the other two men are going out of this room. Do so and stay outside the door as long as you think you stayed out then, and come back about the time you think you heard the crash." Connors nodded compre-

hendingly and threw himself into the act zestfully.

He walked to the door, opened it and turned toward the open door, as if waiting for two other men to walk out and pass him. He followed each imaginary man with his eye. Then he closed the door. After an interval, he opened the door suddenly and rushed in, looking about the room eagerly.

"Now, Mr. Connors, will you please repeat that. Please do as nearly as you can just what you did the first time and try to occupy the same length of time in doing it."

The professor had timed the first demonstration with a stop watch. This time, in addition to starting the mechanism as Connors opened the door, he waited until the detective had closed the door. Then he arose from his chair, walked around it, stood with his back to his chair, doing presumably what Dr. Manx would have done had he acted as described by the boy. He was seated in the same position in which Connors had last seen him, when the detective once more rushed into the room. As he opened the door, the professor pushed the stem which

stopped the fractional timing on his stop watch.

"Very good, Mr. Connors. You did it both times in nearly the same time, within about one second. This is a remarkable performance and I congratulate you. Your time reactions are almost perfect, unusually so. This proves that you probably timed the original occurrence at the Manx home with a reasonable degree of accuracy, accurately enough for our purpose, anyway. At any rate, what do you think I did during the time you were out of the room?"

"Why, you were sittin' right in that chair."

"No, I got out of the chair, walked around it, stared at the wall behind me a little over two seconds, and then came back to the chair. I did all that without hurrying, Mr. Connors. This merely proves that Dr. Manx might have stood up, as the boy describes, and got back to his chair in time to get killed in the interval that you were out of the room. I do not say it was so, mind you. I believe the boy did not see his father stand up and look out of the window at that time. I have a very special reason for this disbelief. The reason is such a crucial one that the entire case may easily pivot around it. So much for that.

"Now let us return to our original theme, the one as to whether Dr. Manx was killed standing up or sitting down—"

"An' whether he was killed from outside or inside the room," interjected the detective.

"Not yet, Mr. Connors. As I have taken pains to impress you a number of times, I do not indulge in guessing. Real scientists never do." This, as all his statements, was made with such an utter absence of egotism or self-consciousness that it never gave offense. He continued:

"When I am able to tell you whether this was done from within or without the room, I shall very shortly afterward be able to lead you to the person or persons responsible for these acts.

"No—at present we are discussing Dr. Manx's position when he was killed. Let us get that straightened out once for all. It may save you a lot of time and energy and prevent you from making useless searches and futile examinations.

"I am assuming, of course, that the description given me by Mr. Hale, Mr. Harmon and yourself as to Dr. Manx's position when you

returned to the room, was reasonably accurate. I do not remember your saying anything about this, but did you find some of the things from the top of the desk scattered on the floor, such things as papers, pens or other desk accessories?"

"Why, yes, some of them was on the floor."

"Precisely. This substantiates the conclusions I have drawn. He was sitting at the desk with his hand or hands in the position of writing or perhaps with both hands resting on it. The blow that struck him did not have the speed of a bullet, but it had greater pushing power. It threw the upper part of the body forward. His hand or hands on the desk pushed some of the things off to the floor, which accounted for what you saw. Perhaps only the presence of the desk prevented him from being thrown a considerable distance from where he sat."

"But, professor, couldn't he have been hit while standin' and then sat or fallen down into the chair? I heard some of them experts testify in court one day—"

"Highly improbable! He was killed instantly, like that!" The old man snapped his fingers sharply. "He could not have moved

voluntarily after he was struck and it is inconceivable that he assumed the position you say he did after he was struck, if he were standing. That would mean that he went around the chair after he was struck. Impossible!" He paused in thought, then continued emphatically, "No, no—utterly impossible. It is against all reason and logic."

The detective sat dejectedly, slumped in gloomy thought.

"My God, professor, ain't this terrible? I've been on the force for nineteen years and never saw anythin' like it. An' s'pose we get some more notes? I don't mean them things that the cranks are sendin'. I mean one of them notes that is comin' in with Jew letters. What then?"

"I believe I can set your mind at rest on that score. I do not think there will be any more real notes."

"How's that, professor?" Connors asked hopefully.

"I am not prepared to say at present, but I have good reason to believe that you will get no more bona fide notes at present."

"Does that mean that nothin' more will happen up there?"

"No!" exploded the old man. "It means nothing of the kind. Do not relax your vigilance for one moment, although all you can do and all your watching may be of no help. I simply mean that you will not receive any more warnings. The killings, however, may go on, unless—until I put a stop to it.

"Have patience and have faith, Mr. Connors. Arrange for that interview tomorrow, with all the members of the household, and let me know. It is not altogether a hopeless task. And now, good night."

Connors had hardly got settled at home when he received a call from Professor Brierly. Matthews was on the wire.

"Sorry to trouble you, old man, but the professor just got an idea. I called your office and they said you had gone along home. The professor wants you to go right up to the Manx home and cut out the section of beam that has the abrasion. Not a large piece, but one large enough to show the scratch will do.

"But you will have to be careful about one thing. When you cut it out, or have some-

one cut it out, be sure that it is carefully marked. There must be no mistake as to just how it came out of the beam, understand. Mark it so that a person looking at it will know which portion of the section faced the window and which faced the sliding doors. I'd suggest that an easy way to do this would be to mark, on the cut section toward the fireplace, the letter F. That will identify it all right and make it easy for the professor to make the tests he has in mind. And further, he wants you to bring or send this piece of beam down here tonight. If you can't manage that, we'll send up for it, but we must have it tonight."

"All right, Mr. Matthews, I understand. I'll see that you get it tonight. I'm sending someone down that way later anyway. There won't be no trouble about it unless those people up there make a fuss about cutting the beam. But if they don't like it, they c'n—well, you know what they can do. S'long."

CHAPTER XI

WHEN Jimmy arrived at the Brierly establishment the following morning, a visit which had now become part of his daily routine, Matthews briefly explained the newest developments in the case and then, cautioning him to silence, he led the way into the professor's laboratory. Here the newspaperman discovered the old man engaged in a series of odd movements. Heaped on a stand on one side were a number of miniature oak beams, about 4 x 1½ x 1 inches in size.

He would clamp one of these miniature beams in the jaws of a vise and shoot at it out of an improvised air gun, a projectile about as large as a medium sized marble. His air gun was stationary and firmly fixed to a work bench. Its line of aim was constant. Each time he clamped a new piece of wood into the vise he took careful aim. Jimmy noticed after a time that each time the gun was directed at a corner of one of the beams; and also that each time the position of the beam was slightly changed,

so that the projectile was propelled from a different angle.

After each shot, the professor took careful note of the angle and holding the section of beam from the Manx home close to the one at which he had shot, made careful comparisons of the respective injury to each. After a while, he varied this by using cube shaped projectiles, shooting these from a barrel that was cube shaped instead of cylindrical. At last he shook his head impatiently and looked up at Matthews. Jimmy greeted him but the old man was apparently oblivious of his presence.

"John, are you certain that your instructions about marking the section were explicit and that Connors understood them?"

"I am certain about my instructions, sir; but I cannot vouch for his understanding them."

The savant once more shook his head impatiently and went back to his work. Occasionally he varied the tests by striking at the miniature beams with a hammer, first with the spherical end of the hammer head and then with the square faced end. Throughout all this he kept up a constant stream of unintelligible muttering. Now and then the young men caught a

phrase or a word—"spherical implement," "octagonal," "pent force," "trajectory," "inequality of grain."

Matthews gestured to Jimmy and they stepped into the other room, the newspaperman on tiptoe. Matthews grinned.

"Oh, don't be afraid of disturbing him. He doesn't know you exist just now. If the house was afire I'd have to carry him out. He would be savage with anybody or anything that would threaten to interrupt his experiments. In fact, that happened once.

"You can see what he's at, of course. Making tests to learn from which direction in that room the blow came that chipped the beam. When he got the notion last night, I had to go out and hunt up a log of wood and nothing but oak would do, of course. Any other kind of wood might not chip in just the way that oak would. All the lumber yards were closed and I had to pretty nearly kill a night watchman in one of them before I got what I wanted. Finally I compromised by giving him a twenty dollar bill. The old man wouldn't accept any excuse for failure to bring a log of oak at that or any other time of the night. If he sent me

out to get a chunk out of the planet Mars, he'd expect me to bring it back.

"But don't get him wrong, Jimmy. I'll say this for him. If he himself would go out after that log of wood, he'd come back with just the variety of wood he wanted. You can bet your life on that. He doesn't spare himself, any more than he spares others. That's why you can't help loving the old bird.

"Anyhow, he's been up with that fool thing pretty near all night. First it was sawing those miniature beams and when I offered to help him, he nearly chewed my head off. Then it was rigging up that contraption of his. At two-thirty this A.M. I picked him up and took him to his room. He kicked and fought like a cranky kid. I put him in his room and locked the door. At six this morning, he nearly broke the door and raised such an awful hullabaloo that I had to let him out. He's been at it ever since. He seems to attach a great deal of importance to the direction from which the blow or missile came.

"You see the difficulty, of course. If whatever hit the beam had left a mark on its lower surface, it would show that it came from below,

at an angle, perhaps, but from below. If it left a mark on the beam on the side, where it was chipped, it would show that it came from that direction; but this simply hit the corner with sufficient force to break away a piece and left no clue as to the direction. The old man, being what he is, has to find out and he took this method of doing it. Depend on it, if it is possible to learn from what direction the blow came, he'll learn it. And the strange part of it is that if it should later develop that the whole matter is totally unimportant, that it has no bearing on the case at all, he will not grieve or be disappointed at so much wasted effort. He'll be just as happy as though it led directly to the complete solution of the crime. He—"

Matthews was interrupted by the professor's entrance. He was bearing several of the miniature beams and the section cut from the beam in the Manx home. He was looking closely at each bit of wood in turn.

"I have it! I have demonstrated from which direction the beam was struck and what kind of an object delivered the blow. At any rate, I now know, roughly, the shape of the object.

It was spherical—probably that stone Connors found."

"From what direction did the stone come, professor?"

He waved the question away. "Immaterial now, immaterial without some further data I expect to have shortly. Only then will it be of any value. Has Connors called up yet, John?"

"No— There goes the phone, perhaps that is he now." Matthews answered the ring, and then returned. "Yes, that was Connors. He wants us to go up there now and he'll meet us there. Coming along, Jimmy?"

"You couldn't keep me away," announced that enterprising young man.

Connors was waiting for them at the Manx home when they arrived. He began at once to question the maid. Adele was sufficiently recovered from her recent grief to talk clearly and lucidly. She was somewhat taken aback when Connors asked her about the stone in the fireplace. After a short pause, she answered a bit reluctantly:

"This stone's been in the fireplace about two or three weeks."

"You knew it all the time?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you throw it away?"

"Well, Harry threw it in here and I—"

"How do you know Harry threw it in—did you see him do it?"

"No, but I as good as saw him. I was in the hall one day and heard something falling in here. I ran in and saw that a big, heavy book end that was on the doctor's desk, there were a pair of them, was knocked down and broken and Harry was out there in the yard. He's been a pest lately, anyway. I scolded him, but he didn't answer. I told him that I'd tell his father and that I would keep the stone to show him. I guess he thinks I have the stone in my room. I put it in the fireplace, thinking to take it away sometime, but it's pretty big and was all covered with soot after a while, so I kept putting it off."

"Didn't Harry deny throwing the stone?" asked the professor.

"No, he didn't deny anything. He's been acting kind of sullen lately, and moody. Can't get a word out of him sometimes."

"If you don't mind, Miss Le Moyne, I should

like to ask you some questions pertaining to the young man's death, Mr. Conrad Manx's, I mean."

Adele brought her handkerchief to her lips and nodded dumbly.

"About how long before he died was he taken ill?"

"Three or four days; four days, I think."

"Who treated him?"

"Dr. Manx and someone from New York."

"There is something else I should like to know. About the time he was taken ill, a few days before, perhaps, did anyone have an operation performed here?"

Even Jimmy and Connors, who did not know the old man as well as Matthews did, noticed an additional tension in his attitude. He seemed to attach a great deal of weight to this question and the expected answer. The maid paused, and replied hesitantly:

"An operation? No, sir."

The professor, in apparent disappointment, paused a moment as if choosing his words and then asked:

"Was there not someone in the house here about that time on whom something had to be

done for which an anæsthetic was necessary? Did they not have to use ether or chloroform on someone?"

"Oh!" Adele's face brightened in comprehension. "I see what you mean. The baby, Mrs. Mooney's baby, the doctor's grandchild, you know, had to have his ear opened or something and they used chloroform. But that wasn't an operation. The reason I said 'no' was because you called it an operation."

"About what time, with reference to young Manx's illness, was this op—did this ear have to be opened?" During all this time the old man had not relaxed his tension.

Adele shook her head. "I don't know what you mean, 'what time with reference.' "

The onlookers could see that it was with difficulty that the old man concealed his impatience with the young woman. Matthews was getting considerable enjoyment out of it, but he was careful not to let his mentor see it.

"I mean, you know about when young Manx was taken ill, do you not?" The young woman nodded. "Well, was this baby ill? I mean, did this op—did its ear have to be opened be-

fore young Manx was taken ill, or after, or about the same time?"

"Oh, I see. Well, I don't remember."

The look on Professor Brierly's face at this reply made Matthews quickly leave the room. The professor was silent for a time, disappointment and anger struggling for expression. Then he resumed:

"Was there anyone else in the house ill about that time or a little before?"

"Well, not exactly sick. Mrs. Manx was complaining about some pain in the face, something like neuralgia, I think; then she said it was a tooth and they were making arrangements to have a dentist come up here and pull it. It was a tooth that had been filled and was giving her trouble for some time."

"When was this—before or after the baby was operated on?"

"This was before."

"What became of Mrs. Manx's toothache—did she have the tooth pulled?"

"No—it got better and didn't bother her any more."

"Did it get better before the baby took sick or after?"

"I don't know, but I didn't hear anything about it since the baby was sick, anyway."

"Do you know if arrangements had actually been made to extract that tooth?"

"Yes, I think so. The dentist from Englewood was going to come here on a certain night and do it."

"Do you remember what night?"

"No."

"Do you remember if it was to be done late at night or early in the evening?"

"I think it was to be done late at night. Mrs. Manx wanted it that way so that the whole house wouldn't be upset by the smell."

"What smell?"

"They were talking of using ether, I think."

"Who was?"

"She and the doctor. The doctor said maybe she could have her gums frozen with cocaine or novocaine, you know, but she didn't want that. She wanted not to know anything about it when the tooth came out."

"And you say this night on which she was going to have the tooth extracted was before the baby was taken sick?"

"Yes."

"About how long before?"

"I'm not sure; about a week, I think."

Professor Brierly dismissed the maid and followed her out into the yard—to look at something, he explained. Matthews returned to the room, convulsed. Watching the old man pacing about the yard, the young man pointed at him.

"Say," he choked, "did you hear him try to tell her in words of one syllable what he meant by the time relation between young Manx's death and the baby's operation? And it wasn't an operation, she says, 'the baby just had to have his ear opened.' And did you see his face when she calmly asserted that the boy threw that boulder? It weighs pretty near as much as the kid. He'd have burst a blood vessel if that interview had continued much longer. It—"

A period was put to Matthews' flow of hilarity by the old man's return. After glaring suspiciously at the young man, he turned to Connors.

"I had a number of other questions to ask that moron but I could not bear her idiocy any longer. Think of a boy throwing that stone

and think of—but never mind. I believe that for the time being we have gone about as far as we can with Dr. Manx's death, without connecting it with the death of the young man. There are phases about the young man's death that will have to be cleared up. Then we can take both cases as a whole and arrive at a solution. We must now—"

"Solution!" broke in Connors. "D'you think you can clean this thing up, professor?"

The old man turned toward him in genuine astonishment. "Have you any serious doubts about it? Of course we can! It is a mere matter of tracing backward from cause to effect, that is all."

Once more the fact struck Connors that the old man could make statements that in the average person would sound like bragging, make them with a simplicity and utter lack of self-consciousness that lent his remarks special weight.

"We must now," the old man continued, "correlate some very important factors in both cases. It does seem now that it is one case, but we shall know that definitely when we finish

questioning the other members of the household. We must question them all."

"Professor," asked Jimmy, "how could you know that there was an operation performed here about the time young Manx was taken ill?"

"I couldn't know, and didn't, but from the data in hand thus far, I formed a tentative theory, a hypothesis, rather. If this hypothesis was correct, there had to be an operation in which either ether or chloroform was used. Elementary and primary."

He turned. "Let us go upstairs and learn something of the plan of the rooms and their relation to one another. It may help us in our inquiry later."

They learned during their inspection of the upper floor that Dr. Manx had bought this home shortly after he was married. He was one of the early physicians who made it a practice to keep his office separate from his home. Thus, while his practice was in New York, he had his home here. Before the automobile drove the horse from the road, his buggy, crossing the ferry and toiling up the hill every eve-

ning, and going along the same route in the early morning, was a familiar sight.

The house was an old one when purchased and he had it remodeled from time to time as his family and his prosperity grew. Mrs. Petersen told the men that the house as they now saw it did not at all resemble it as she found it when she came there to live more than twenty-five years before.

When they had returned to the lower floor, Professor Brierly took up the further examination of the housekeeper.

CHAPTER XII

MRS. PETERSEN had lost her belligerent air. She appeared utterly unaware of her difference with Connors on their first meeting. She answered questions readily and simply. She had been a member of the household since a few years after Dr. Manx's first marriage. She herself was unmarried. On this occasion her nationality was not apparent in her speech, but she spoke carefully and with some difficulty. It was when she was questioned on intimate matters pertaining to relations in the household that she showed some reluctance.

"Mrs. Petersen, what were the relations between Dr. and Mrs. Manx?"

"They were as happy as most couples."

"Did they have any differences?"

"Differences? Yes."

"Violent quarrels?"

"Some."

"How long ago?"

"Oh, what's the use?" she suddenly burst out. "You will find it all out anyway and

you may find it out wrong from others. I'll tell you the whole thing. After the first Mrs. Manx died, the doctor met this Mrs. Manx. That was before she was married to her first husband. Dr. Manx was in active practice then, and her family physician while her first husband was still alive. She was very beautiful, as she is yet.

"Dr. Manx, with all his being a fine man and everything, was always soft on women. There was some trouble with a few patients, although I shouldn't say it. In other ways, he was the best man in the world. Maybe it was mostly the fault of the women, you know how it is with some women and their doctor. Anyhow, when he brought her home as his wife none of us liked it much. I know I didn't. I'm getting old enough to see such things clear and understand better. I was beginning to think of myself as mistress of the house and I was a little jealous, not the way of a woman and a man, no, not that at all. I never thought of Dr. Manx that way, don't think it. I thought of myself more as his mother; I used to take care of him like I took care of the children.

"She seemed to be very fond of the doctor.

She seemed to like Harry very much, though I always thought it a little queer. I never believed that she liked him as much as she pretended and as she liked Robert—that was the young man who was away and came back a little while ago. Robert liked her, too, after a time, but not at first. I think Dr. Manx thought they liked each other a little too much. I'm not sure, but I think that is why he was forced to go away.

"Shortly after she gave birth to her baby, she got sick and when she was well, both legs were completely paralyzed. She couldn't walk. Then she got terrible, in temper, I mean. It seems she sort of felt cheated. My work is very light and I got a lot of time to think and I been thinking a lot. There she was, a pretty young woman married to a man old enough to be her father. Young Conrad was almost as old as her, I think, and here she was a cripple, with none of the things a wife of the great Dr. Manx could expect to have.

"She couldn't even have her elderly husband, being a cripple and him away so much. And she was terrible jealous of him. It got so he couldn't hardly see a woman patient. She was

too proud to go into his consulting room. So she used to suffer while he was there alone with the patient and then after the patient left, she took it out on him.

"He finally gave up active practice and only went out on consultations. He was the greatest diagnostician in America, you know," she said, with a glow of infinite pride. "That and his research work was all that kept him alive lately, I guess.

"But a funny thing's been happening. The doctor himself, who was always of the nicest disposition had been getting cranky and kind of moody. I think he was troubled about something. I asked him a few times, but he wouldn't say. And she's been getting sweeter. She's been nicer to all of us for a year now. Outside of the thing that was troubling the doctor so much, things in this house were much better lately, when this terrible thing had to happen."

She blinked several times and the muscles of her throat and mouth worked convulsively. Throughout this rambling, disjointed narrative, the old man was the only one of her audience who had not showed restlessness. He had lis-

tened with absorbed attention, as he always listened to things that interested him.

"Mrs. Petersen, do you recall when Conrad Manx, Jr., was taken ill?"

"You mean this last time, with meningitis?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I do."

"Was there anyone else ill in the house about that time?"

"Yes. The baby, Cora's little boy, had something the matter with his ear, and Mrs. Manx had neuralgia, some trouble with a tooth, I think."

"Was an anæsthetic used for the baby?"

"Yes, chloroform."

"When did this happen? I mean, how close to young Manx's illness was this?"

"I think the baby had his ear opened a few days before Connie was taken sick."

"Who performed the operation on the baby?"

"Dr. Manx himself. He didn't want to do it, but Cora wouldn't have anybody else. She said it wasn't as if it was a regular operation like mastoids or something, then she would let

a specialist do it; but a thing like this, she didn't want anybody else."

"Was there an anæsthetist?"

"You mean someone to give the chloroform? No, she stood by herself and helped the doctor. She was a nurse in the war, you know. The little one got better right after that. I was in there a while, too. The doctor himself gave the chloroform and we handed him things."

"Was this done at night?"

"Yes."

"Late?"

"No, about ten o'clock or maybe a little after. I went to a movie in Hackensack. I went to the first show. Max drove me down, and a little after we got back the doctor asked me to help him with this. He didn't want Cora around when it was done, but she wouldn't have it different."

"Was young Conrad asleep then?"

"Connie? Yes, he was in bed. Since he came back from the war he couldn't stay up late and a funny thing is that he couldn't sleep very good when he got to bed. He'd get up very early and go prowling around, first to the kitchen for a bite."

"Where was this little operation performed?"

"In one of the front rooms upstairs. David, Cora and the baby occupied both front rooms since they came here to live."

"Was Conrad's room near that room?"

"Yes, right next to it. The doctor said kind of jokingly that the chloroform might help him get a night's sleep. He even opened the door a little and after he got through with the baby he went into Connie's room. He saw me in the hall afterward and said that maybe chloroform was the thing the boy needed; he told me that the boy was sleeping sounder than he remembered for a long time."

"Where were the other persons in the house that night?"

"Well, Alice wasn't home; she's in school, you know. Mrs. Manx was in her room. Harry was around the house somewhere during the operation, but he went to bed right after. I heard him say good night when the doctor got through. Adele was around somewhere. Robert was out."

"What time did Robert come back?"

"I think I heard him drive in about half past eleven. He had the little roadster."

"How many doors are there in the room that Conrad Manx occupied that night?"

"Two, the one into the room that Mrs. Mooney occupied with the baby; and the one into the hall."

"Who went to bed last that night?"

"The doctor, I guess. When I went to bed, everybody was in their room. I looked in Cora's room and I saw that she and the baby were asleep. The little one was relieved after the ear was opened and he fell asleep right after he came out of the chloroform."

"Where was the doctor?"

"In his laboratory, in the basement. That's where he did his work, unless it was writing. That he did in the room where he—where he was killed."

"And when did you say, Mrs. Petersen, this operation took place with reference to young Manx's illness?"

"It was a few days before."

"Will you tell me, Mrs. Petersen, how badly is Mrs. Manx paralyzed?"

"Very bad. It's from the hips down and she can't move her legs at all. But she gets around fine in the wheel chair and she can do most things herself. Dr. Manx had a special nurse for her at first and later wanted to keep a maid, to sleep in the room right next hers, but she didn't want that. Feels bad about anybody seeing her legs, I guess."

"That will be all, Mrs. Petersen, thank you."

She looked at Connors inquiringly, to see if he had any questions to put to her. The latter had not seemed a bit bored by the examination. Indeed, he had taken a lively interest in this exchange between Professor Brierly and the housekeeper, except at the opening during her desultory account of the domestic difficulties of the Manxes. As Mrs. Petersen left the room, the old man stirred impatiently.

"He performed the operation himself. He did not have an anæsthetist or a trained nurse. That means no record as to the date. He would not keep such a record, since he was out of active practice." He stopped and brooded for a moment.

"I want to see the laboratory and look at

those rooms upstairs again." He left the room and they heard his feet briskly mount the stairs.

Jimmy turned to Matthews.

"How does he know chloroform or ether was used about that time, Jack, and what about the relationship between the baby's illness and young Manx's?"

"Yeah, Mr. Matthews," urged Connors, "I wanna know about that, too."

"Well, you see, if his theory is correct, meningitis was induced in Conrad Manx by inoculating him through the soft spot in his skull, the site of his old injury, by injection. That is a terrifically painful matter. We have determined that this soft spot was directly over the place where there are nerves and ganglia that control some of the important functions in life. A hypodermic needle, or other implement, stuck in there would cause excruciating pain.

"If done to an infant, it would howl, of course, and a baby's howl might pass unnoticed; not so with a grown man. So he had to be put in such a physical state that it could be done without attracting attention. A narcotic or soporific would not do. If you gave him enough of a narcotic to enable you to do

such a thing, you'd have to give him enough to endanger life. The only thing left, then, was an anæsthetic. Now the choice of an anæsthetic in this case was limited and had to conform to certain conditions. It had to be one which would not attract attention by its powerful odor. There are several like that. There is nitrous oxide; that is the laughing gas used by dentists. That has a slightly sweetish odor which is perceived only by the patient. It is so slight that the person administering it does not get it. The objections to using it in the Manx case are two. First, it needs a bulky apparatus; second, it must be administered through a hood or mask that is brought into close proximity with the face, mouth or nose. That's out. Somnoform is objectionable for the same reasons, although the apparatus is not bulky. Ethyl chloride can be given, but it also is administered through a hood, at any rate in such a way that the intended victim would awaken.

"Ether or chloroform can be effectively given without bringing the cone, hood or other apparatus close to the face. It can be administered by holding a saturated sponge or ball of

absorbent cotton near the face. But ether and chloroform have such a powerful, penetrating odor, that a small quantity will permeate an entire house in a very short time. Professor Brierly made up his mind, therefore, that if this was an inside job, and he became convinced that it was, such an operation in which either ether or chloroform was used had to be coincident with the deadly injection. Simple, eh, what?"

"Simple, huh!" ejaculated Connors. "Gee, what a wonderful detective he'd make. I'd better see what's keepin' him. I heard him go down to the basement again."

Connors found Professor Brierly peering about among the effects of the late Dr. Manx. The detective watched him with interest and awe. He saw from the labels on some of the containers that the contents were such that he would no more have touched them than he would a live electric wire. Later the old man went rummaging about in a large chest that contained all the miscellany that is found among boys' discarded toys and equipment. Evidently this chest was the last resting place for all those objects, aside from conventional

wearing apparel, that a boy discards. Conrad, Robert and Harry had apparently each in turn thrown into this chest old athletic uniforms, old bats, gloves and balls, broken tennis racquets, dilapidated "musical" instruments with which boys torture the ears of their loved ones, etc., etc.

Among the old books in the chest, textbooks and the sort of volumes that boys read only in the privacy of the cellar, Professor Brierly found a book that seemed to interest him. One of the leaves especially engaged his attention. Connors stood respectfully by until he returned the book to the chest and stepped over to the table that held Dr. Manx's microscopes and accessories for research.

Professor Brierly searched a long time among the slides, not definitely as though looking for something special, but idly, if not quite casually. One of the slides interested him particularly. After examining this slide closely, he opened several drawers in the desk. In one of these he found a number of loose-leaf notebooks which engaged his attention for a long time. One of these he compared carefully with the slide that he had scrutinized so closely.

Connors, when he approached the Professor, thought he saw the word "ergot" on the sheet of notes that absorbed the old man's attention. He knew that this was the name of a drug that he had heard of somewhere, but beyond that it meant nothing to him.

After examining and comparing other slides and the same sheet of notes, Professor Brierly perfunctorily looked over the other microscopes and accessories and accompanied Connors to the upper floor.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN the professor and Connors returned, Matthews alone, of those present, could see that the old man was full of pent-up excitement. He asked for Robert Manx. When the young man came in, he appeared far too nonchalant for such an occasion, as if mentally braced for a trying ordeal.

"Mr. Manx, have you formed a theory as to the manner of your father's death?"

Robert shook his head slowly. "I have not even formed an idea, much less a theory."

"And you have no notion of how it might have been done?"

He again shook his head, first in indecision, then emphatically.

"Did you know anything of the breaking of the windows and shutters in this room, Mr. Manx?"

"Why, yes, we all knew about it."

"Do you not think, and did you not think at the time, that it was odd?"

"Odd? Certainly, but then, there are a

great many odd things: this is an odd house; there are—" He caught himself, as if tempering his last remark, and added, "Life, generally, is odd, is it not?"

"What did you think about it at the time?"

"I didn't think about it. It just happened, that's all."

"What do you think of the two notes followed so closely by the deaths?"

"What can an intelligent person think of those notes? The second one is remarkably like the flood of notes that came to the newspaper offices. It was vague, to say the least, and might be put down as the product of another crank. The first note, well, that threatened a specific disease and was followed by just that disease attacking the person named. That note—well, even that note might be a coincidence."

"Rather a remarkable series of coincidences, are they not?"

"Remarkable, yes. Remove the coincidental factor in any series of events and they are remarkable. But as coincidences, they are rather simple, are they not? at least, no more extraor-

dinary than other series of events which go to make up coincidences?"

"Would you still maintain that they are just accidental if I told you that we have proof that the same person wrote both notes?"

A gleam of interest flickered across his impassive face.

"Really?" he paused. "Then I should not know what to think about them?"

"Do you remember the occasion when your little nephew had a slight operation on his ear?"

"Yes, vaguely."

"What fixes it in your mind?"

"Let's see—oh, yes. I was with some friends in New York and I came home about eleven-thirty, I should say. I was rather surprised to find that most of the household was still awake. Another thing, it seemed strange to me to see Con on the roof. It was just as I was leaving the garage, after I put the car up. I thought I saw him on the roof."

"You mean your brother Conrad?"

"Yes."

"Are you certain it was he?"

"Well, not positive, now that you mention it, but at the time I certainly thought I saw him moving about the roof."

"Did you have occasion to mention this to anyone?"

"No, I believe not."

"Was it a bright night?"

"There was a half-moon, I think. That can be verified, of course, but there was some fog up here. I remember while crossing the ferry that the fog was pretty thick. It was not so bad up here, but still it was foggy."

"What was he wearing?"

"Oh, the usual togs, knickers and so on."

"Might you not have been mistaken on account of the fog?"

"Oh, yes, I may have been. I didn't trouble to ask. I simply took it for granted, that's all. I saw dad on his way to the laboratory and he told me about the little fellow's trouble. Of course, I knew something was wrong as soon as I got into the house. I smelled the chloroform."

"Can you fix that particular night with reference to your brother's last illness?"

"Roughly. I believe it was some time after-

ward. I should say that Con was taken ill, say, three or four days after the little one had his ear opened."

"Who attended your brother?"

"Dad called in a specialist from New York."

"Did your father have occasion to call in any other specialist recently for consultation about any other member of the family?"

Even young Manx noticed the tension accompanying this query. They all felt that the old man, though sitting in his characteristically immovable attitude, was taut as a tightly coiled spring.

"I don't know," he answered, after an interval. Then, with a grim, sardonic smile, "I have been back home only a short time. I was away, you know."

"Where were you when your father was killed?"

"I was in my room. It was right after Con's funeral, you know."

"Have you any idea as to the whereabouts of the other members of the household at that particular time?"

"Let me see. Cora was in the room she is occupying since the trouble with the baby.

Mrs. Manx must have been in her room—yes, she was. I saw her go there shortly before I was aware that something had happened downstairs. They are all I can locate with any definiteness. Oh, yes, I have an impression that Max was in the garage tinkering with a car."

When Robert had left the room, the three men looked at one another.

"Cool bird, isn't he, professor?" remarked Connors.

"Yes, indeed. A very calm young man, has self-restraint. There are things he could tell us, but he is a gentleman; and a gentleman, in the conventional sense, does not speak of such things. And as gentlemen, we cannot ask certain questions, can we, Mr. Connors, not at the present stage of the inquiry, at any rate?" He mused. "Mr. Connors, do you know what a ballista is?"

"Huh? Wait a minute. I heard one of them experts in a trial once use a word something like that. He used it about a hundred times, that's why I remember, but I don't know what it means. Do you mean an expert on rifles and firearms?"

"No, the word you probably heard was 'bal-

listics.' I mean ballista, a word frequently confounded with catapulta or catapult. Did you ever hear of that?"

"I heard the word. It's—lemme see—no, I don't know what it is."

"The ballista, or catapulta—terms confused after the wars of Julius Cæsar—was a machine made for the purpose of hurling heavy stones at the enemy. The catapult was used to propel spears and arrows a greater distance than they otherwise would go. These two machines, Mr. Connors, were often used in ancient wars, and it might prove interesting to you to learn something about them."

Connors stared, then his face cleared.

"What could one of them machines do, professor? I mean how big a stone could they shoot and how far?"

"They could make a breach—er—hole in a wall, Mr. Connors, and they have sunk ships. Not our modern type of ship, of course, but ships fairly well constructed of wood."

"By God, professor, you've got it! That was the thing used to kill the doctor. Sure, I gotcha, I c'n see through a fence as good as the next one an' maybe Max knows—"

"Mr. Connors, will you call the chauffeur in and interview him yourself? I want to listen."

"Sure, professor. I think I know the line you're takin'. I'll turn that Dutchman inside out."

There was now an air of anxiety about Max Schiller. He seemed sullen, whereas during the first examination he was indifferent, with the frankness of indifference.

"Max," began Connors, "you told us about them broken windows and shutters. Got any idea how it mighta happened?"

Schiller shook his head.

"Didn't you try to find out?"

"No—I just repaired the damage, that's all."

"Didn't you sorta ask, mebbe the boy and Adele and the gardener about it?"

"I don't ask questions. I'm paid for the work I do and I do it."

"Do you remember the night when the baby was sick and had his ear opened?"

"Yes."

"Where was you that night?"

"I drove Mrs. Petersen to Hackensack and then I visited some friends in Maywood while

she went to the movies. Then I called for her and drove her back."

"What time did you get home?"

"About ten o'clock, I guess."

"Who did you see when you came home?"

"Who did I see? Nobody. I went to bed after a while. I went in the kitchen after I put up the car, for a bite, and Mrs. Petersen told me about the baby. Then I went to bed."

"Did you see anybody on the roof?"

"When do you mean?"

"I mean then, that night."

"No, I didn't see anybody on the roof."

"Sure?"

Schiller nodded.

"When was young Manx taken sick with—with what he died of?"

"About four, five days before he died."

"Was he sick before or after the baby was fixed up?"

"It was about the same time."

"Was it before or after?" An impatient edge crept into Connors' rough voice.

"It was about the same time—well, maybe it was a day or so after."

"Are you sure you didn't see nobody on the roof that night?"

Jimmy wondered if there was not a trace of fear in the man's attitude now. Connors was taking on the aspect of the hound on a trail. With his cosmopolitan, sophistical cynicism, the reporter had not had much respect for Connors, who hailed from the "sticks." He was changing his opinion now.

The chauffeur shook his head mutely.

"Could you see anyone on the roof plain, from the garage?"

"Yes, it was bright then."

"What do you mean by 'then'?"

"Well, later it was foggy."

"How do you know it was foggy later, if you was in bed?"

"I was told about it the next day."

"Who told you about it?"

"I don't remember."

"Hey, Mac," roared Connors to the plain clothes man on guard in the hall. "Bring in Mrs. Petersen."

"Mrs. Petersen, that night when Max drove you to Hackensack, when the baby had his ear opened, was it foggy?"

"Yes, Max had trouble driving home."

"You mean it was foggy on the road?"

"Yes."

"Was it foggy when you got home?"

"I guess so."

"So somebody told you it was foggy later, huh?" Connors turned belligerently to the chauffeur.

"You didn't ask me about the fog elsewhere. I said that it was bright here. Mrs. Petersen did not say it was foggy here—she said she 'guessed so.' "

"You said it was a bright night."

"I meant it was bright here."

"Oh, you meant it was bright here. And you didn't see nobody on the roof?"

"I said I didn't."

"Max, do you know what a ballista is?"

The chauffeur stared uncomprehendingly.

"Or a catapult?" softly interjected the professor.

At this Max was seen to stiffen. Even before Connors repeated the old man's quietly intoned words, it was apparent that the question had affected the man as no other had.

"Or a catapult?" Connors repeated.

Max wet his lips. In the rough and ready psychology of the police and the police court, Connors was an adept. He had started twenty years before as a patrolman in Rutherford. Connors was a crude product of his times, environment and methods, but he did not lack intelligence. When Max did not answer, he waited a moment, then went on softly:

"Do you know what that word means, Max?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever see one?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Right here."

"Whose was it?"

"Harry's, the boy's."

"Did you help him make it?"

"Yes."

"Where is it now?"

"I don't know."

"Where was it on the day Dr. Manx was killed?"

"I don't know—on the roof, I think."

"What was it doin' on the roof?"

"Harry used to shoot at things, trees and

such. He used to shoot stones in the river."

"When did you see it last?"

"I don't remember."

"How strong was it?"

Max shrugged.

"Did you ever shoot with it yourself?"

"Yes."

"Shoot pretty hard?"

"Yes."

"Could it cave in a man's head?" Max paled.

"I don't know."

Connors lurched forward and stood glowering over him.

"You know that that was the way Dr. Manx was killed. You knew about this catapult. Why didn't you mention it before?" After a pause, he continued.

"Was it foggy up here that night or wasn't it?"

Max sat clutching his knees, the knuckles of his hands showing white and tense. He did not answer.

"Did you or didn't you see anybody on the roof that night?"

Still Max did not answer.

Connors turned to the professor.

"Professor, what does one of them things look like, or better, would one of you mind going along with me to see if we can find it. Hey, Mac!" to the guard in the hall. "Keep your eye on this bird here for a little while. If he tries to get away, put him under arrest."

"Am I under arrest now, sir?" asked Schiller.

"Smart, ain't you, huh? Gonna talk about your rights and warrants and the constitution, huh? Well, lissen, feller, in a case like this, in a murder case, I got the constitution right here." He whipped out a pair of handcuffs and an automatic. "No, you ain't under arrest yet, but make the wrong move and you will be, and make a move that's very wrong and you'll be worse than under arrest, see? Keep your eye on him, Mac."

"He won't get away from me," Mac assured him.

Matthews went with Connors; Jimmy and the professor remained with Schiller and the plain clothes man. After a full half hour, the two returned, empty-handed. Connors looked at the chauffeur in silence, as if hoping with the

power of his stare to draw from the other what he wanted to know.

"We couldn't find it. It ain't on the roof. It ain't in the garage and it ain't anywhere in the house. We looked all over. You say it was on the roof; where was it kept when it wasn't on the roof?"

"In the garage."

"Could the kid lug it up and down from the roof to the garage by himself?"

"He used to take it apart and carry it from one place to another in sections."

"He could, huh? What was it made of?"

"Wood and cord, mostly."

"Of wood and cord?" incredulously.

"Yes, and a few nuts and bolts." Connors looked at the professor, Matthews and Jimmy. They all nodded.

"Sure you didn't have it in the garage that day the doctor was killed?"

"No, I didn't see it that day, since then, or for some time before that."

Schiller was now answering with more assurance.

"And you got no idea what became of it?"

"No."

Connors stepped closer to the chauffeur.

"Max, are you going to stick by this line?" The detective received a long, level stare which did not flinch or waver now.

"I am telling you the truth."

"All right, you can go now. But don't leave the house. If you do, you'll be locked up."

After giving orders to his men not to permit the chauffeur out of their sight until further notice, he turned to the others jubilantly.

"What do you think of that, hey, professor? Guess we're gettin' somewhere. Think this winds it up, huh? We didn't find that catapult, but that's all right, you can't have everything. I'll take this bird along and swear out a warrant against him, an' then—"

"And charge him with what?" asked the old man sharply.

"Charge him with what? Why, charge him with first degree murder! It's—"

"Don't be an idiot," snapped the professor irascibly. He started to his feet, but was interrupted by Matthews. That irrepressible young giant strode over to Connors and shook his hand heartily.

"Congratulations, Mr. Connors. You now belong to a small, select group. The professor talks that way only to persons he loves." He waved his hand airily and appeared not to observe the professor's glare.

"See here, professor," insisted Connors, "ain't it a cinch he's guilty? He built that catapult thing. Right? He knew all about it all the time. He knew that that was the thing that killed the doctor. It was the only thing that could've killed him. You figgered it out yourself, didn't you? Right?"

The old man, with a great air of patience, as if arguing with a refractory child, spoke slowly.

"Do you think, Connors,"—this was the first time the old man had addressed him informally and the detective glowed with pride and pleasure—"do you think, Connors, that Schiller is an intelligent man?"

"Oh, sure, he's smart all right."

"Well, put yourself in his place. You can do it because you have some sense." This was vast praise coming from this source. "He knew of the catapult. He knew that we knew he was in the garage, in direct line with the window. He did not deny that he was in the garage.

His deafness is genuine, that can be determined by tests. If he watched the room, he must have known that you had just left it. How could he hope to commit the murder without the boy knowing it?"

"Why didn't he tell us about the catapult? Why was he so nervous when we first mentioned it? I been in this business long enough to know when a man is afraid; and believe me, he was skeered when I first mentions that thing; and that was the first time he was really skeered. He was skeered stiff. Why was he lyin' about the fog and about seein' somebody on the roof? Tell me that! You know as well as I do that he was lyin' about that. Right?"

"Yes, Connors. I was coming to all that. Just try to look at it from his point of view. What you said just now is the very gist of the entire matter. I urge you to try to look at it from his angle. He realized that the catapult would be a suspicious circumstance. Assume that his innocence is real. He sees clearly a chain of circumstances that would inevitably make him *seem* guilty to the eye of the average policeman. The one link in that chain that we did not have until today, or so he thought, was

the knowledge of the existence of that catapult. Suddenly you mention it, when he is quite certain that all danger in that direction is past.

"Here was a definite intimation that the least he would have to undergo was arrest and probable trial for first degree murder. Is not that enough to make an intelligent man show fear, Connors?"

"Why was he lyin' about the man on the roof?"

"That's merely a part of his thought processes concerning the whole matter. It was foggy and while he thought he saw someone on the roof, at ten-thirty or later, about when Robert saw him, would it not appear a suspicious circumstance, if he said that he saw someone on the roof and could not tell us who it was? He was still afraid of having us find out about the catapult. If he had known that Robert had seen someone on the roof, and could thus have his statement corroborated, I assure you he would not have hesitated to tell us about it. A thoughtful man, such as he is, can readily see that for a man likely to be suspected of murder, it is far more dangerous to tell a truth that may seem like a lie than to tell a plausible lie.

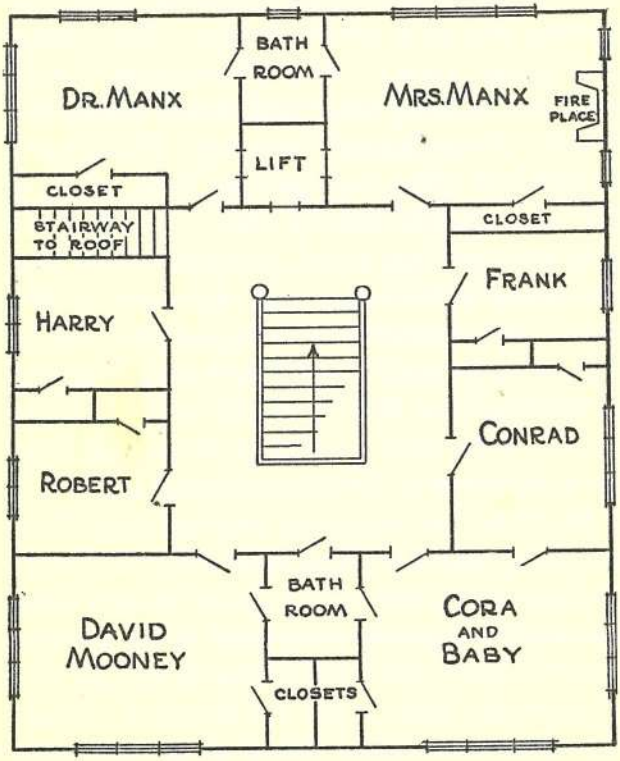
I believe he might have told us that he heard the crash of the breaking window, but for the difficulty of explaining why he did not run out."

"Then where the hell does that leave us? We didn't get anything out of the others."

"Quite the contrary. I have obtained from the others all that I could have hoped for at this time. The only one out of whom I got nothing new was Schiller. I knew, or rather strongly surmised, the existence of the catapult. There was nothing new in that and, paradoxical as it may sound, his very lie, since we are certain that it is a lie, corroborated Robert's story as to the presence of a person on the roof that night. And do not bother looking further for the catapult. You will not find it and I am not certain that its loss or destruction will not help us in the final solution of this problem.

"Yes, Mr. Connors, the information I have obtained from the others has been interesting and rather instructive than otherwise. Will you keep me informed as to new developments, please? I may have some definite suggestions to offer. Thank you, Connors, for giving me this opportunity."

When Professor Brierly reached home, he drew from memory, supplemented and assisted by Matthews, a rough sketch of the upper floor of the house. Appended is a copy of his sketch.



CHAPTER XIV

Prosecuting Attorney Harmon of Bergen County was in a vicious humor. Everything was going wrong. The Manx case, which promised to bring him prominently before the people of the nation, certainly of his own county and state, was proving a boomerang. He remembered, bitterly, the rosy vision he had when smiling, confident Jimmy Hale had first come to his office with the story of the notes. He recalled the killing of Dr. Manx, practically before his eyes. Here was his chance of proving that he was a real servant of the people, as he liked to think of himself and as the newspapers of his party pictured him.

But this case was going sour on him. The only thing they had found since the murder was a stone, which this old busybody Brierly said was not the stone that was used in the killing. How the devil did Brierly know it was not the stone used? What proof did he have? What was all this scientific drivel about the skull and its wound not fitting the stone? A skull

wasn't wax or snow. A stone was a stone and this one was certainly large enough to serve the purpose. He'd wager that he could get half a dozen men, who qualified as experts, who would swear on the stand and prove that this was the stone that did it; or at any rate, that it was done with some such stone.

Connors was a fool to let himself be gulled by that old fossil. The old guy himself had said that the blow came from directly behind; there was the broken window to prove that this was so and that the stone came from the yard somewhere. The maid said she found the stone in the room and that the kid threw it. In the first place, the kid denied it and his word was as good as hers on the witness stand; and anyhow, her testimony could be discredited before a jury because she had not spoken of the stone until a member of his, Harmon's staff, had found it. And maybe he could dig up something else on the girl that would further abolish the worth of her testimony. You could always get something on that kind of a dame if you went about it the right way and he knew how to do that sort of thing, you bet!

Suppose he didn't convict the Dutchman?

And, by the way, there was another damning thing against him—he was a German. You could bring in the war to make the world safe for democracy and other juicy bits that always sound well and look well in the newspapers. Well, suppose he didn't convict him? What of it? Don't a great many murderers get off? Aren't all the papers and periodicals always bellyachin' about the looseness of our judicial system? This would be but one more proof of that looseness, that's all. But he would have shown that he was not just a mere ornamental adjunct to the judicial machinery. Then let the papers laugh that off. They were all laughing at him, damn 'em, even the administration papers were beginning to poke mild fun at him about this Manx affair. He remembered with regret some of the bombastic statements he had made at the beginning of the case. He wished now that he had been a little more modest.

Prosecutor Harmon was working himself up into the futile, dangerous rage of the little man —dangerous because that kind of man may do, and often does, almost anything while in that mood, without calculating the cost or possible consequences. He cursed the papers, the

county, the state and the nation. He cursed everybody and everything for not appreciating such a fine public official at his true worth.

To hell with Connors. To hell with the professor. To hell with 'em all. He'd show 'em. Connors was a fool to let that gorgeous opportunity get away from him when he had the chance. Max, the chauffeur? What difference did it make what happened to the chauffeur? Many men were indicted and tried for murder on less. He pushed savagely at the button which summoned a clerk from the outer office and asked that young man to send in Connors.

"He's out, Judge," the clerk reported. Everyone dependent on him called him "Judge." He liked it; it added dignity to his office.

Damn Connors! He was always out when wanted for something important. Connors had slept on an average of three hours out of the twenty-four since the opening of the Manx case. Well, he didn't need Connors anyway. Wasn't he the prosecuting attorney? Didn't he have the power and the entire legal machinery and police force of the state at his command? He ordered the meekly waiting

clerk to send in Mr. Lucas. Lucas was an assistant prosecuting attorney and a replica of Harmon except that he was heavier as to avoirdupois.

Lucas was ordered to go before Judge Cashin and swear out a warrant for one Max Schiller, charging him with the willful murder of Conrad Manx. Lucas opened his little eyes wide. For Harmon to take such a step in the absence of Connors was unusual. But Harmon, with an imperative, if not very impressive, wave of the hand, closed the interview and leaned over some papers. He was unwilling to look his assistant in the eye at this moment. He was conscious of a vague uneasiness, but he whistled nonchalantly, like the boy in the cemetery, and appeared unaware of the other's surprise.

In a short time a warrant was sworn out by one Alvin Lucas, to the effect that one Max Schiller did willfully, feloniously and maliciously, with premeditated intent, kill with a lethal weapon, to wit, a stone, one Conrad Manx. This warrant was served with commendable dispatch and Max Schiller was placed in a cell in the Bergen County jail. The fol-

lowing morning he was formally charged with the crime and held without bail for action by the grand jury.

About the time that Max was being charged with the murder, Connors, with a frosty look in his eye, stepped unceremoniously into the private office of Prosecutor Harmon. He grasped the arm of the young clerk who was standing at the desk, firmly but gently, and as firmly propelled him through the door. Then he faced his chief.

The latter, after one look at the bulky figure before him, turned quickly to a blank sheet of paper on his desk. "Good morning, Connors."

After a long, painful silence, Harmon looked up. "Well, what's eatin' you?"

"Who ordered that warrant?"

"I did."

"Why wasn't I told about it?"

A vestige of the rabbit's courage flared up.

"Say, who do you think you are and who do you think you're talking to? You're taking an awful lot on yourself for a chief of county detectives. If you don't like—"

The ominous calm of the big figure stopped Harmon. He looked up. Connors deliber-

ately shot a stream of tobacco juice into a receptacle in the corner of the room, deliberately took out a cigar and as deliberately bit the end off. He spat the end on the floor, stuck the cigar into the corner of his mouth, where it slanted skyward at an aggressive angle, and finally looked at his nominal chief. The frost in his eye thawed. He smiled gently, if rather grimly.

"Oh, yeah." He started walking around the desk toward the seated figure. The latter got up hastily and blurted, "You'd better—"

"Oh, don't be skeered. I won't hit you." He continued his slow progress around the desk and came to rest on a corner of it, seating himself loosely. Punctuating his remarks with a thick finger, he addressed the other.

"So I know what I c'n do, huh? Shut up! I'm doin' the talkin' now. I s'pose you mean I can resign. Well, you'll make fertilizer for daisies before I do that. I s'pose you know I c'n send you in to keep company with Schiller in there, don't you? But I won't. I been in this racket for a long time an' I don't play the game that way.

"I don't say you're wrong about Schiller, at

that. You may be right. I got a hunch that way myself, but you made a mistake puttin' him in the cooler, just the same. This old professor is a white guy. He's a big little man. He's got guts and he's got brains. He showed in the other cases that that topknot of his is got more than just that shock of bushy white hair. He showed me a coupla times how the machinery of a real live brain works—see?—and I'm for it strong.

"I ain't kiddin' myself about being a detective. I'm a strong arm who can take a trail and make a pinch. When we get the right man, it's because we've got dumb luck or the crooks is dumb. Right? I'm strong for this professor and I'm strong for this young white hope of his. They're both square, they ain't both thinkin' of number one all the time. They're in this thing just because they like it, see? It's so seldom I see a guy doin' somethin' not for what there is in it for him that I'm enjoyin' it and I'm enjoyin' them. If what you done yesterday will get me in wrong with them, then *you'll* be in wrong with *me*. Get me?"

He sat there a moment, looking at the little man pleasantly, almost benignantly, then

shifted his unlighted cigar to the other side of the mouth at a more daring angle, if that was possible, and without another word walked slowly from the office.

Once outside, he walked with more decision. He came into the court just in time to witness the closing passages in Max Schiller's hearing. After ascertaining what disposition had been made of the case, he went to a booth and called up the home of Professor Brierly. When Matthews identified his voice, that young man's tones took on a lugubrious regretful sound.

"Sorry, Mr. Connors, and you showed so much promise of amounting to something under our tutelage, too. So—"

"Aw, cut out the gab and lissen to me. I wanna tell you—"

"You cannot tell me anything, Mr. Connors. We know all that you are going to tell us—plus. We had so much hope for you—"

Connors squirmed. He could never tell when Matthews was serious. Now there came distinctly over the wire a very audible sniffle and the young man's voice took on a still more mournful tone, with a shaking tremolo. "How could you, Mr. Connors?"

At this the detective's face cleared. The young man had overreached himself.

"Honest, Mr. Matthews, I had nothing to do with it. That stuffed shirt Harmon done it without me knowin' anything about it. I wouldn't have done it without tellin' you first."

"Is that so? Well, in that case, you can come up here and we'll smoke the pipe of peace and drink to Harmon's damnation. It's a good thing for you, though, that you phoned before coming. We were constructing a special catapult, designed to kill any Bergen County policeman, uniformed or otherwise, that came through the door. The old man was sore, and when he's sore he's rank poison. All right, old man, come along and we'll receive you with open arms. We'll plan something special for your friend Harmon."

Four days later, Matthews greeted Jimmy with a grin that was a little more expansive than usual.

"Jimmy, his nibs has now undertaken the serious study of criminology, with everything that that implies. He regrets that he wasted so many years of his life without seeing the enormous interest in the study of that subject. He's

now going to out-Holmes Sherlock himself, believe me. Added to the knowledge of cigar ashes and the different kinds of mud found in various parts of the world, that the professor already has, you can see for yourself what the resultant combination will be.

"What intrigues him greatly is what we poor mortals term the human element in its purest aspects. He used to sniff at the so-called human element. A human being was to him, in the biologic sense, a collection of cells; in the chemical sense, a combination of atoms and molecules. To hear him on the matter, it was easy to convince oneself that it was entirely possible to manufacture a human being synthetically, as it were. The reactions of this aggregation of protoplasm, cells and molecules, according to him, were physiological, chemical and psychological.

"But now, Jimmy, instead of talking of reflexes, he has begun to talk more of complexes. He himself has begun to discourse on the human element and human values and equations in the same sense that other normal humans do. And this Manx case has done something queer to him. He has been on a

rampage, all by himself. He is out now on goodness knows what kind of errand. In the past, you know, he took me along, always, and let me drive him through traffic.

"For some reason, he has left me alone for the past few days; and instead of taking one of his cars, has engaged cabs. And if you knew how he hates taxis and the methods of their drivers, you would know what that means. He is looking for something, Jimmy. I believe he is half ashamed of what he is doing and the way he is doing it. The only reason I can ascribe to this is that what he is engaged in is so radically different from his usual habits of thought and action that he is reluctant to let me know about it until he succeeds in whatever he is trying to do.

"If he fails, then of course I will not know anything about it and shall not be able to laugh at him. All this is so contrary to what you'd expect from him that there must be something very unusual about the entire matter; that is, more unusual than most of the things he does. On a couple of these trips, he took Connors with him, but he won't take me. Isn't that funny?"

"Isn't that perhaps because Connors, on account of his official position, could get into places and inquire about matters in which the old man would have no status?"

"I believe that's right, Jim. That must be it. That's an odd friendship that has grown up between those two. His nibs says of Connors"—here Matthews' tone took on the precise, clipped accents of the professor—" 'he is rough, uncouth, uncultured, but he has some very desirable human virtues.' Human virtues, mind you, Jimmy. I didn't think he was aware of the existence of them. And Connors calls him, behind his back, 'me little pal.' Here he comes now. And, yep, Connors is with him, sure enough. Funny thing about it is that that flatfoot doesn't know any more than I do what the professor is about."

CHAPTER XV

"ANYTHING new, professor?" asked Jimmy, as they came up.

"No, but we are approaching a solution. John, did you develop those films and make copies of the items I gave you for the labels?"

"Yes, sir, what are they?"

"They are photographs of the several sections of the Manx laboratory in the basement of the house. Those lists I gave you are the objects photographed and you will label each photograph appropriately, please, using those lists. Use great care in this, John. It is highly important that no error be made. The doctor had a very interesting laboratory. He seems to have been carrying on extensive research in bacteriology and pathology. Let me see those photographs, John."

As he pored over the pictured sections of Dr. Manx's laboratory, comparing each with the typed slips of paper that Matthews had given him, his face took on a harsh, strained expression. Matthews was mildly anxious. For the

first time in his life, he seemed to note uncertainty and hesitancy in the old man's attitude.

Professor Brierly absent-mindedly gave the newspaperman permission to look at the photographs that he himself had laid down. Jimmy saw before his eyes an array of jars, retorts, test tubes and other containers, such as make up a well-equipped, modern laboratory. On some of these containers, the labels were plainly discernible in the pictures. Jimmy saw names of germs and diseases, many of which he was familiar with, and some he had never heard of. He put the photos down, with a shudder at the possibilities that the old man's interest implied.

The telephone rang and only Professor Brierly remained undisturbed by its jangling. The others listened expectantly to the maid's answer. Each was tense, keyed up. They relaxed as the maid came from the other room and told the newspaperman he was wanted.

"Hale," came the harsh voice of "Iron Man" Hite. "I had a vague impression that *you* were covering the Manx case." When the city editor was mad, he called Jimmy "Hale."

"I am, chief, I am at Professor Brierly's now on that."

"Zat so? Well, how in hell is it that I have to get news about the Manx home from our local correspondent in Englewood?"

"News about the Manx—I was up there myself late yesterday afternoon—and, wait a minute, chief, hold the wire—" He stepped into the other room. "Hey, Connors, when were you up to the Manx house last?"

"Early this mornin'—why?"

"Did anything happen up there?"

"No. Why, what's goin' on?" Jimmy did not answer. He was back at the telephone.

"Connors was up there only this morning, chief. He's here now and he doesn't know about anything happening. Why, what does the local correspondent up there know?"

"He just phoned in that Mrs. Mooney, the oldest daughter, is dying of gangrene."

What makes a good newspaperman is his ability to see a story in all of its ramifications, each phase of it in its relation to every other phase. Jimmy reacted to this simple statement as the body does to a galvanic battery. All his mental faculties became alert and perceptive. His body reacted in sympathy. He stiffened perceptibly. Connors and Matthews had

crowded close, sensing that something of significance was going on. Only the professor seemed unaware of anything unusual and stayed at his desk. But in a moment Jimmy relaxed. He shook himself, mentally. He had the big newspaperman's contempt for the local correspondent. He also acted in self-defense. He felt half guilty of the reporter's worst crime—falling down on the job.

"Oh, you know how those kids get things balled up—"

"Of course I know it, damn it. Do you think I wouldn't have a thing like this verified? Roy had the doctor who was called in on the case on the wire. It's straight. Cover it!"

Jimmy turned to the others. "Office just called me up to say that Mrs. Mooney—that's the oldest Manx daughter, the married one—is dying of gangrene."

Connors received this news indifferently. Matthews' eyes opened wide and he gave vent to a long, low whistle. Then he hurried into the other room and crisply announced the news to his mentor. The latter bounded up from his chair and stared at his assistant. He expressed horror, rather than astonishment.

"Gangrene, John? Are you certain?"

Matthews explained briefly.

"Do you know the name of the physician who was called in?"

"I can get it, professor," volunteered Jimmy.

"Get it," ordered the old man, "and get him on the phone immediately."

After a short talk with the physician, the old man hung up the receiver. Then he lifted it again and asked for a number.

"This is Dr. Brierly—Brierly, B-R-I-E-R-L-Y, Brierly," he fairly shouted into the mouthpiece. "Oh, let me talk to someone with brains. Yes, this is Brierly. I want to talk to Blix. What's that? Well, he's not too busy to talk to me.—Blix? Drive up to the Manx home in New Jersey at once and look at a young woman whose case was diagnosed as gangrene. What? Both extremities, yes. At once. Turn your patients over to someone else, or throw them out, if you must. This is of the utmost importance, Blix. What's that? Well, I'll send someone to take you up there, he knows where it is. And report at once. I shall be waiting."

"John, pick up Blix, he'll be waiting, and drive him to the Manx place."

As Matthews was going out of the door, Jimmy ran after him. "Here, Jack, take this along, it will save you trouble with the cops going up." He was unpinning his police badge when he saw a large majestic figure with gold badges on blue coat and cap and gold buttons instead of the silver ones displayed by policemen.

"Oh, fine," exclaimed Jimmy. "Wait a minute, Jack." He hurried after the figure which was slowly, ponderously striding along. After a brief colloquy, Jimmy returned, accompanied by the officer.

"Jack, this is Inspector Ball. Inspector, Mr. Matthews. The inspector, Jack, has some business to transact up at Dyckman Street ferry. He'd like to have you give him a lift. He can just spare the time to pick up Dr. Blix, but after that you'll have to hurry. The inspector wants to get up there fast." All this with a straight face, but Jimmy grinned as the two men climbed into the car which was standing at the door.

Matthews was at the wheel as the officer was

getting slowly into the car. As the latter was about to seat himself, he was hurled violently to his seat. He grabbed the side of the car with one hand and his cap with the other. Matthews had started in second gear and before a hundred yards had been covered, he was driving at racing speed.

Jimmy returned in time to get the gist of the old man's instructions to Connors. The latter was now at the telephone getting in touch with the Manx home and talking to one of his men. He was telling the guard to get hold of every morsel of bread, cake, pastry, flour, meal, cereal or grain of any kind. He instructed this man to get all of this into a place where he could watch it and guard it against any kind of tampering. Jimmy looked at the professor, who was standing near the telephone listening to the other's directions. At the end, he nodded approvingly and went back to his desk, where he again took up the perusal of the photographs. He put them down shortly and looked up at Jimmy.

"Yes, young man. You are just bursting with questions. Yes, this last bit is of a piece

with the entire devilish pattern that we are trying to unravel."

"Do you mean to say, professor," burst out Connors, "that this was done in the same way as—the other? Why, I thought this was a sorta disease—"

"Yes, Connors. This is a 'sorta disease,'" he mimicked. "This is just one of the kind of things that the diabolic ingenuity we are combating would devise. This," he continued in a dead, flat monotone that fixed the attention of his hearers, "is perhaps one of the rarest occurrences of its kind in recorded criminal history. I say 'recorded' criminal history advisedly, because God only knows how many times this sort of thing has been attempted in the past without attracting attention. I have been taking pains in the past few weeks to glance at criminal history, hoping to benefit by the lessons of the past; but, alas, this seems to be without recorded precedent.

"Yes," he went on musingly, "this is just the thing that might be expected from the intelligence that devised the other two deaths. I will show you. By coincidence, I happen to be experimenting with just this variety of—"

He pressed a button and asked the maid to send in his housekeeper. This was the first time that Jimmy was privileged to see this member of the professor's household. She looked startlingly like the professor. If Jimmy had not heard Matthews say that the old man had no living relative, he would have been certain that she was his sister.

"Mrs. Wells, did you put away that loaf of rye bread I asked you to bake? And did you use precisely the flour I gave you?"

The old woman nodded.

"Will you bring it in—and a knife?"

When she had complied, the old man cut a slice from the loaf and turned to Connors.

"Do you like rye bread? And you?" to Jimmy.

They both nodded.

"Try a piece of this." Cutting the slice in half, he offered a piece to each.

"Say, professor, I ain't exactly afraid, but—"

"Oh!" The old man's face rippled into one of his rare smiles. "I see. That's all right, it's quite safe." Breaking a bit from the piece he had offered to the detective, he put it into his mouth.

With a shamefaced grin, the big man began chewing.

"How do you like it?"

"Pretty good," both pronounced unanimously.

"Yes, it is pretty good." Then his air of unaccustomed lightness dropped from him. "If you ate a loaf of this a week for several months, you would both die of endarthritis—gangrene!"

The jaws of both men stopped working. They stared at the old man in fascinated horror and superstitious fear.

"It's all right—swallow your mouthfuls. I took as much as you did. It won't hurt you." He sat back and continued in his familiar didactic manner.

"Ergot is a drug of high therapeutic value, and is used extensively. Its chief physiological effect is to contract the involuntary muscles. Involuntary muscles," he went on, patiently, "are those over which we have no control, such as the muscles of the heart. Among other involuntary muscles which this drug affects powerfully are the muscles of the walls of the blood vessels, the arteries and the veins.

"The contraction of these muscles over an ex-

tended period of time will cause their inflammation; then they will adhere—stick together. This will happen first, of course, where the flow of blood is lightest, that is in the extremities—hands and arms, feet and legs. The closing up of these vessels will cause the blood remaining in them to become stagnant and gangrene will set in.

"Ergot is a parasitic fungus which grows on rye and occasionally on other kinds of grain. It has also been known to be produced in bread undergoing fermentation—bread whose flour is free from this drug.*

"Professor," interrupted Connors, "didn't I

* *Sanitary Record, London, October 25, 1878:* A remarkable case of fatal poisoning of two persons from eating a bread pudding is reported by Professor A. H. Allen of Sheffield, England. Two bread puddings were made from scraps of bread and sandwiches, which had been accumulating for some weeks, together with the additional use of milk, eggs, sugar, currants and nutmeg. The scraps were very moldy and were mixed with ham, butter, etc. The two puddings were baked in separate ovens, one, a very large pudding, being imperfectly cooked in a notoriously slow oven and subsequently eaten by the cook who made it, the proprietor of the eating house, the waiter, a child of three, and a patron. Everyone who partook of this pudding was violently ill with symptoms of irritant poisoning. The child and the waiter died, the latter lingering a week. A careful examination for ergot was made by Professor Allen, as well as microscopical research for fungi, both of which were found. The flour was examined for ergot without success, and this was the case with another pudding made from the same materials used in mak-

see the word ergot on some notes and things you was lookin' at in Dr. Manx's laboratory?"

"Yes, you did, but," with a keen glance at the detective, "it is not what you think, Mr. Connors. While these notes referred directly, perhaps, to the ergot, or some of it, that was given to Mrs. Mooney, your present guess about it is far-fetched. We must seek further than that for a solution.

"What you and I saw, Connors, is one of the most awful features of the entire devilish case, but put your present idea out of your mind."

He paused a moment in brooding silence, then continued:

"It—ergot—can also be produced by permit-

ing bread. Only one person ate of the second pudding, but was not made ill.

Wharton and Stille's *Medical Jurisprudence:* There have been many epidemics of chronic poisoning by ergot called "ergotism," caused by eating ergotized cereals and the description of this ergotism dates from the sixteenth century, when a strange, convulsive disease broke out in Hessia; the same disease appeared later in Voigtlander and in 1702 the whole of Freiberg was attacked. Successive epidemics appeared in Germany and France; in 1710 Dr. Noel had no less than fifty cases under treatment at the Hôtel-Dieu; the mortality was great.

In one case, which occurred at Wattisham, Suffolk, out of a family of eight, one of whom died, five persons suffered the loss of feet and legs. They had been eating freely of wheat which had been cut in the rainy season and had lain on the ground until the grains were black and totally decayed.

ting flour or grain to become moldy, or in bread in the natural course of fermentation. The diabolical nature of this particular form of murder is that no human being on earth could, from the most exhaustive diagnosis, ascertain that the person was suffering from ergot poisoning.

"Only in an autopsy—after death, remember—could ergot be detected—and then only by a microscopic examination. In such a case, it will not react to chemical reagents. Of course I am speaking of the slow, chronic ergot poisoning, not of the acute form.

"And the brain that could devise the death of young Manx by meningitis, and the death of Dr. Manx by a medieval engine of destruction, without apparently leaving a trace, could, and probably did, devise this horrible form of death for the young woman. Do you grasp—do you see the horror of it?" He stood up and his deep eyes were blazing with a lambent flame. "It had to be given to her in small doses over a long period of time in order to induce in her the chronic form of poisoning that would insure almost certain death without leaving a trace. How can a poison be given constantly? In an article of the diet, of course. What is

more commonly eaten than bread, cereal or some such food? That is the way it was done. And the one man who might have been of timely aid was put out of the way.

"No fuss, no bother, no purchases of the drug, that might later be traced. Simply, either buy flour or grain that is ergotized or permit nature to take its course with flour free of the drug by moistening it, perhaps, and permitting it to get slightly moldy. Of course the idea itself is not at all new to me. It has occurred to me for a long time as one of the many innumerable ways that a person or persons might be killed. This particular thing might not have been brought to my notice at all if it had not been for the sending of the first two notes. As I said, I do not believe there will be any more notes to warn us. Each death will come suddenly, as this one has, out of a clear sky—if I do not stop them. The doctor's death was probably hastened because the murderer knew that those notes had been sent and the doctor himself perhaps could have prevented it. While his death may have been planned, it was, as I say, premature."

CHAPTER XVI

He stopped and sat meditating for a long time, only occasionally raising his head to look impatiently at the telephone. At the first tinkle of the bell, he sprang up and hastened to the instrument, reaching it before the maid.

"Yes, Blix! What did you find?" And then, "Thanks."

He turned to the others, who had followed him.

"Mrs. Mooney will die. Blix is an authority."

For the first time since their acquaintance, Jimmy noticed a slight drag to the old man's shoulders. He did not speak with his usual irascibility. There was a gentleness about him, the gentleness of exhaustion. He smiled at Jimmy.

"What do you think of your infallible Professor Brierly now, Mr. Hale? You said a number of flattering things about him in the paper and that was one of your adjectives, was it not?"

"I think as much of him as I ever did." Genuine sincerity rang in the young man's voice. "Nothing has happened to change my mind about it. You have, to date, done more than anyone else and more than anyone could have done."

"I must be held partly to blame for this last tragedy, Mr. Hale. The habits of a lifetime are difficult to circumvent. I am accustomed to exact, scientific procedure—step by step. The trial and error method are not for me and my kind—"

"You mean, professor, that you could name—" began Jimmy eagerly.

The old man interrupted hastily, as if anxious not to let him finish.

"I mean nothing specific, Mr. Hale. I am just talking in generalities. I mean, if I were inclined to jump to conclusions, without exact, demonstrable proof, I might now— Oh, well, we are what we are, Mr. Hale." He sat lost in thought and then looked up briskly, his old self once more:

"Mr. Connors, I shall have to have your help. I need authority to examine the articles of food that I asked your man to gather. I may

also find it necessary to question Mrs. Petersen, and others, perhaps. Make certain, please, that your man followed your instructions. I have an experiment to finish here which will take me several hours. Can you meet me at the Manx home this afternoon?"

This was satisfactory to Connors.

When they arrived, Robert Manx met them at the door. He greeted the professor with frigid courtesy. He spoke savagely, bitterly.

"I suppose, by the old rule of succession, I am the master of the house now. Well, if I had my way, I'd set a match to it and leave the damnable place. But Mrs. Manx cannot live in a hotel and I suppose it would be the decent thing to wait until Cora dies. Another thing, in a hotel we would have about as much privacy as we would in a subway train. I have been obliged to shoo off some curiosity-seekers with a shot-gun. Well, more questions, more probing, more prying, I suppose. Can't we even take sick and die decently and in ordinary privacy without all this notoriety? I tell you I'm fed up with it." He turned his back squarely on the four men and left them in the hall.

Connors was about to start after him, but restrained himself. He let him go and turned to the professor. The latter asked the officer stationed in the hall where the food products had been put. The old man ordered them all brought down to the basement and piled in Dr. Manx's laboratory. Here, using the doctor's various instruments and drugs, he examined a specimen of each of the foods laid before him. At the end of a painstaking examination, he looked up with a shade of disappointment.

"I did not find what I expected. Where is Mrs. Petersen?"

When she came down, Professor Brierly asked her to be seated. He waited a moment, as if uncertain where to begin.

"Mrs. Petersen, the man was instructed to gather up all the flour, grain, cereal, etc. Is it all here?"

Mrs. Petersen looked at the scattered heap of barrels, boxes, crocks, cartons and containers of all kinds. After looking over each item carefully, she answered, "Looks like everything is here."

"Did you do all the cooking for the family?"

"Yes, with Adele's help." There was an

audible sniff, as if to imply that she did not hold the maid's help in her culinary labors in much esteem.

"Did you bake much, Mrs. Petersen?"

"I don't know what you mean by 'much'—I baked for the family."

"What did you bake?"

"Why, everything."

"You mean you never even got bread from a baker?"

"What? Eat baker's bread in this house? I guess not!"

"Did you bake anything special for any member of the family?"

"No, nothing special. Some like one thing, some another, like in all families, but nothing special."

"Did you bake or cook anything special for Mrs. Mooney?"

"Cora? No, well, that is, nothing particular. She was told to eat whole wheat bread about six or eight months ago and I baked her a loaf every week, along with the rest of the bread."

"Can you give me the recipe for your whole wheat bread?"

Mrs. Petersen looked at him in astonishment,

apparently amazed that such a request should be made at such a time.

Professor Brierly repeated the last question.

"Oh, I got no recipes, like the newfangled housekeepers. I use a little of this and little of that, and everyone says my cooking is good. When somebody from the family is away for a while, you ought to see them eat and hear what they say about the cooking in the places where they've got recipes! You ought to see Alice eat when she comes home from school, God bless her—"

She was running on, with a glow of pride, when the old man interrupted her.

"What kind of flour did you use?"

"What kind of flour should I use?"

Plainly, the professor was losing patience.

"Mrs. Petersen, I'm not asking you what kind of flour you should use, but what kind you *did* use. This is serious—I am not questioning you idly. WHAT KIND OF FLOUR DID YOU USE?"

"Whole wheat flour."

"Did you use all of it on the last batch of bread?"

"No, I had about ten pounds in a crock left

from a sack of it." Her eyes roamed about the collection of containers. "Why, it ain't here, and that crock ain't here. Why,—it ain't here!" With a rising inflection, as if the fact had just dawned on her.

"Did you always keep the crock in the same place?"

"Sure I did, what kind of a housekeeper do you think I am?"

"Go up with the man and see if it is still there, and if it isn't, see if you can help him find it."

The professor sat still in his characteristic attitude in the deep chair, looking, except for his deeply sunken eyes and white hair, like a small boy masquerading as a man. He was now running his fingers through his hair, his eyes concentrated on the containers. The pair returned almost immediately.

"The crock's here, but the flour's gone."

"Are you certain you had flour in it when you used it last?"

"Yes, about ten pounds."

"Are you certain it is the same crock?"

"Yes, it's the only one in the house—we used to make beer in it."

"Are there any remnants of flour in the bottom of it now?"

"No, it's clean—looks like it's been washed."

"Where is the barrel where the flour was kept?"

"This was the last lot I took out of the barrel and the barrel was burned up, with some other junk."

"Where was it burned?"

"In the furnace, I think."

"When was this?" eagerly.

"About two weeks ago." The old man turned to the detective.

"Connors, ask the man who collected this food to look at the crock upstairs and come down here."

Professor Brierly turned to Connors' assistant.

"Do you remember seeing that crock Mrs. Petersen showed you when you got this stuff together?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why didn't you bring it down here with the rest?"

" 'Cause it was empty. There was nothin' in it so I didn't bother with it. That's all right,

ain't it?" He looked anxiously from the old man to Connors.

"Yes, that's all right. Was Mrs. Petersen with you then?"

"No, sir. She was upstairs with the sick lady and the doctor."

"Was anybody with you during that time?"

"Well, not with me, exactly. But first the maid and then the kid and then the young feller come snoopin' around watchin' me. The kid come twice. Once the maid came by herself and once when I ast her to show me where things was."

"All right, thank you." The man went back to his post.

"Mrs. Petersen, when did you bake last?"

"Four, five days ago, last Tuesday."

"Any of the bread left?"

"Everything is here," resentfully, sweeping her hand toward the clutter.

"Do you see any of that whole wheat bread here? I examined all the bread and I don't recall any."

Mrs. Petersen walked to the pile and rummaged among the bread, cake, pastry, etc.

"No, there's none here."

"Was there any left from the last baking?"

"Yes, almost a whole loaf. Cora didn't hardly eat bread the last two, three days." With a visible effort, she choked back her tears.

"All right, Mrs. Petersen, you may go. One moment—you do not remember anyone in the kitchen tampering with that flour?"

She mutely shook her head. When she left the basement, Professor Brierly looked grimly at Connors and Jimmy.

"You remember the matter we discussed at home?" Both nodded.

"Any doubt about it in your minds now?" Looking at Connors, "This is one of the things you detectives would call a clue, is it not? Or would you call a missing object, a thing that does not exist, a clue? Would it not be treated by the colossal legal minds in the same way as they treat a body as evidence of a crime, the corpus delicti, is it not? Since the flour does not exist, it can have no legal status and you could not very well introduce as evidence an object that does not exist. Is that correct?" The professor had lapsed into one of his finer veins of sarcasm and everybody present recog-

nized this last question as being a purely rhetorical one. No one answered.

"Here is a matter of which the court probably could not take judicial cognizance and which is yet ineluctable proof of the commission of a crime. One of the thousands of instances which shows up the entire legal machinery as sadly lacking and grossly at fault. Even the scientific mind, which is far more exacting than the legal, would under certain conditions consider the non-existence of an object or person as proof. The difference between scientific reasoning and legal reasoning is that one deals only with facts, the other very largely with sophistic argument. One is limited wholly by the merits of an issue and will accept no substitute for fact; the other has precisely the limitations of the average human mind.

"What doubt can there be that the absence of the flour and the partially consumed loaf of bread, among all the things here, is almost clear proof of the theme I touched upon earlier in the day?" He dropped his arms.

"Well, gentlemen, I haven't much hope in that direction, but I suppose we shall have to

make a thorough search and do some more of this everlasting questioning. Let us, as John would put it, 'go to it.' "

Exhaustive questioning of all the members of the household failed to elicit anything that would act as clue toward the finding of the missing flour and bread.

When Robert Manx coldly threatened to shoot the next visitor who had neither personal nor official reason for coming to the house or grounds, Connors placed a guard about the estate to keep visitors away, as well as to keep all inmates of the house in it. Connors found shortly that his own county force, supplemented by the inadequate police force of Englewood, was insufficient. He therefore called on the governor, who promised and gave him state police aid. With the help of the state troopers it was possible to keep out the perennial thrill-seekers, and for the first time in many weeks the family had a semblance of peace.

Three days after the first announcement of her illness, Mrs. Mooney died. The family thereupon settled down to a grim, humdrum existence, broken only occasionally by the visits of the police. The present life of the family

was marked by an expectancy, a watchfulness that was taking its toll in mental and physical stress from every member of the family and domestics, with the exception of Harry, his younger stepbrother and the Mooney baby. Shortly after the death of Mrs. Mooney, Connors walked into Harmon's office and in acrid playfulness asked:

"Well, who you gonna arrest now? You got the chauffeur, he's got a alibi, 'nless he flew outa your coop. An' you must arrest somebody to show you're on the job. Who's it goin ta be?"

Harmon looked at his inquisitor sourly. He was not happy. He wished that he could retract the act that put him into such an unpleasant position. The papers that made flattering comments about him after Schiller's arrest managed a complete change of front. From direct flattery in the editorial columns and "editorialized dope" in the news columns, they were now transforming matter into veiled sneers and even open criticism. This was particularly true of the papers in and near his county. The New York press, and other dailies, after the first day ignored his existence altogether. This hurt his

pride more than direct ridicule and criticism. Connors' direct frontal attack, therefore, touched a sore spot. The latter continued.

"Ain't such a damn hero no more, are you? But that's easy. Go an' arrest somebody else. I'll tell you what," with elephantine sarcasm, "swear out a warrant for the Mooney kid, he's only a year old, but he's a holy terror. I heard him yell. Swear out a warrant and ask the governor to send the milish out to help you. How about that, huh?"

Finally the dapper man snarled, in defense. "Well, what did you and that wonder professor of yours do? Fine story you rigged up between you about whole wheat bread poisoning. How far would you get in court with such a story? All you and him have done is talking and gabbing and asking questions and giving out interviews to the papers. That damned old fossil of yours—"

"Hold that!" This was said in a low voice, but it had the reverberations of a tightly drawn violin string. Connors walked closer to the other. "Say all you want about me, but if you say another word about the old man I'll—I'll—say, if you wasn't so triflin' an' little, I'd take

you apart to see what makes you so slimy and greasy and slick all the time. But don't lemme hear you talk about Professor Brierly again. I'm gonna forget you're the boss, if you do it again. An' what I come to ask you is, how long you gonna hold that Dutchman?"

"None of your damn business!" squealed Harmon. His voice had reached a falsetto note. His face was suffused and the muscles of his neck swelled until they overflowed his tight collar. Connors looked at him.

"Look out, Judge, or you'll bust a blood vessel," was his parting taunt.

CHAPTER XVII

THE short illness and subsequent death of Mrs. Mooney brought about in the newspapers a verbal war that was unprecedented in a case other than a closely fought general election.

Hale's paper ran an eight column streamer headline with a three column drop, leaded caps. This paper featured Professor Brierly's estimate as to the possible cause of death. It regarded as full substantiation of this theory the fact that the whole wheat flour and the three-quarter loaf of bread were missing. Hite gave Jimmy free rein on this story. With his skill at vivid narrative and the mass of detail he had obtained in his formal chats with the professor and later with Matthews, followed with his first-hand narration of Mrs. Petersen's examination, Jimmy turned in what all his colleagues termed a masterpiece. This praise was not limited to the colleagues on his paper alone. Newspapermen on other papers agreed with this estimate of Jimmy's opus.

Then started the verbal war that material-

ized into a veritable deluge. Some rival papers in the city and elsewhere simply lifted Jimmy's story bodily, sent out one or two men for amplification and polish and let it go at that. Others, keener rivals, took issue with Professor Brierly's conclusions, really with Jimmy's story, and threw open their pages for opinions combating those of Professor Brierly on the matter.

The latter enterprising journals brought experts, scientists and pseudo scientists to prove the utter absurdity of Professor Brierly's views on the killing of Conrad Manx and, later, Mrs. Mooney. Few if any of them paid any attention or gave any space to the death of Dr. Manx. Those who took the side of Professor Brierly in the discussion called it the "murder" of the two unfortunate victims. The others called it the "death" of these victims.

Those of the latter school insisted that if Professor Brierly were right, a post-mortem examination of one or both victims would prove him so. They insisted that this was so particularly in the latter case, since ergot does not disintegrate under decomposition or putrefaction.

Persons in all lines of endeavor, industrial,

commercial, mercantile and professional, took violent part in the controversy. Lawyers, some of them with national reputations, took sides in this verbal war. On the one hand, they said that the broadcasting of such views as were put forth by Professor Brierly, or were put forth in his behalf, was a menace to the sacred institutions of law and order. These asserted that this kind of thing would intensify the prevalent crime wave and make the proper administration of justice even more difficult than it already was.

On the other hand, some lawyers of equal prominence asserted that the one thing needful to stamp out the crime wave was the frank and fearless discussion of just such matters; that with more general knowledge of such subjects, the successful concealment of crime would be made more difficult, if not impossible.

Meanwhile, during all this hubbub, Professor Brierly was blissfully ignorant of the war that was waging about him. All he saw in the papers was what Matthews chose to read to him, either to tease him or for a more serious purpose. He never read the newspapers. Their loose and careless methods of handling fact and

scientific data always made his gorge rise. His late liking for James Hale was an unusual concession to a profession he heartily disliked.

Jimmy never misquoted him and but for the exigencies and demands of the daily newspaper, he would never quote Professor Brierly without first showing him what he had written. Whenever Jimmy was in doubt about what the professor had said he took care to verify it; and, if the proximity to press time made this impossible, he would leave out doubtful material.

The old man had also learned that Hale was a man who could absolutely be relied upon. Because of Jimmy he greatly modified his antagonism to newspapers and newspapermen generally. Jimmy convinced him that most modern newspapermen could be trusted to keep their words under any circumstances.

One of the bizarre phases of this case was later to have a profound influence on its termination. Because the thousands were restrained from satisfying their morbid curiosity by looking at the Manx home from near by, many of them found a way of overcoming the objections raised by Robert Manx.

The house, standing as it did on a point or

bay of land abutting on the river, was visible from any part of the Hudson for a stretch reaching from Dyckman Street ferry to Yonkers. Many of the disappointed seekers for a thrill armed themselves with field glasses and from the river all along the New York shore, wherever a foothold was obtainable, took to watching the house. The result of this was that never, as long as daylight lasted, was there a moment when the house was not eagerly scanned by thousands of eyes.

These became in time familiar with the regular movements of Mrs. Manx, who spent most of the daylight hours on the roof when weather permitted. The watchers used to look eagerly for her first appearance of the day, when she would emerge, propelling her chair, from the shed that sheltered the upper terminal of the lift.

Her first appearance was always the signal of eager focusing of the thousands of searching lenses that dotted the river and the New York shore.

Mrs. Manx, who was aware of this eager scrutiny, was apparently indifferent to it. If she was unpleasantly affected by it she never

gave a sign. She would sit her allotted time reading, sewing or gazing about. Several times she was seen to level a pair of field glasses and sweep the river and the opposite shore. But she never by a sign showed that she was aware of the scrutiny that would have undermined the poise of most persons, men or women.

Jimmy was no longer being treated to so much of the professor's company. The old man was usually out when he came to call. When he found him, he did not get much from the scientist. The professor appeared absorbed in a problem that made him oblivious to everything that did not directly bear on the point at hand. Jimmy could not get much from Matthews; he knew better than to ask. He knew that the young assistant would tell him all the professor wanted him to know.

It was while Jimmy was talking to Connors as they left the professor's house one day that he got a new angle on the old man's activities. Connors was in an expansive mood. After some casual talk the detective asked:

"Say, Mr. Hale, what do you think the old man is doin' goin' around to all the nut doctors for?"

"Nut doctors?"

"Yeah, you know, them—er—them noorologers?"

"Neurologists?"

"Yeah, noorologists 'nd syky—syky—"

"Psychiatrists?" again prompted Jimmy.

"Yeah, that's right and hypnotizers too. I'll bet we've been to every one of them birds in all the boroughs and in Jersey too. I've been goin' around with him a lot, you know; a few times to sorta make the way easy for him because I'm a detective, you know. What do you think he's after? I know it's about the Manx case, but I'm darned if I know what he's drivin' at.

"I heard him talk to a coupla them birds. Each time after a lotta talk that don't mean a thing to me on account of the big words they use, he asks one of them if Dr. Manx has, well, consulted—is that the word, consulted? Well, each time he asks one of them if Dr. Manx has consulted him about somebody in the Manx family. What do you think that means, Mr. Hale?"

Jimmy did not answer. He knew that Connors was not violating a confidence in telling him about these visits. He felt certain that

the reason he himself did not know of the excursions was because neither the professor nor Matthews had thought it of sufficient importance to tell him. If it were not of importance there would be nothing lost by asking about it. If it were there would be, perhaps, a nice juicy bit for his next story.

When he went back into the house and broached the matter, there was no attempt at concealment. The old man answered at once—frankly, directly, without any attempt at evasion. If he did not want to tell Jimmy something the latter wanted for publication, Professor Brierly did one of two things. He either told the newspaperman that he did not want to tell him, or he told him fully what he wanted to know, after exacting Jimmy's promise that it would not be published without his, Professor Brierly's, permission. This had given place to a perfect mutual understanding that neither could conceive of destroying.

"Why, yes, Mr. Hale. What I am about to tell you is not for publication for a very special reason. The premature publication of this might precipitate a series of events that should make the last three deaths look like a Sunday

school picnic as I once heard you graphically describe it. But I shall not go further into that phase of it at present.

"I visited those psychiatrists, neurologists and psychologists because I am certain that Dr. Manx, shortly before his death, must have consulted one of them about some member of his family. This is a very crucial and important factor in this entire matter." He was now speaking slowly, spacing his words even more carefully than was his wont, as if to impress his hearer with the seriousness of his subject.

"On this, Mr. Hale, the structure of my entire theory rests. Since the beginning of this deplorable affair, I have often chafed at the inhibitions forced upon me by my training. If I were a detective in the popular sense of the word, I might have jumped to a conclusion three days after Dr. Manx's death. If I had been right, the outcome would be happy, of course; if I had been wrong—God help us!—I might have precipitated, as I told you, something very terrible.

"This kind of thing has often happened in scientific research and experiment. I have, therefore, been taught to be most careful.

There is no less reason to be careful in this regard than when experimenting with inanimate objects.

"I have an appointment with Connors for this afternoon to take me to the Bergen County jail to see Schiller, the chauffeur; he may be able to help me in this matter."

"How can Schiller help?"

"Reason tells me that Dr. Manx must have consulted a specialist on nervous diseases on behalf of a member of his own family. He must have done this recently. I have called upon every man, within the metropolitan area, whom a man like Dr. Manx might have consulted. I have also written and telegraphed to every man within reasonable distance, who might have been consulted. I have just recalled that the celebrated neurologist, Professor Fritz Meister, of Vienna, was in New York about three months ago.

"I learned that he put up at the Waldorf-Astoria during his stay here. Schiller may remember driving Dr. Manx there about that time. If he did, I shall learn who of the local men acted as his assistants or nurses while he was here and I shall learn from them whether

or not Dr. Manx visited him. I believe I shall be able to overcome any ethical scruples of divulging such a thing. Then I can cable Professor Meister and receive verification of my surmise. Fritz and I are old friends." This was said simply, and Jimmy got an additional thrill at hearing this unassuming man call the world's greatest nerve specialist by his first name. At the same time, he and Matthews had difficulty keeping their faces straight. The precise, exact and exacting scientist who scoffed at detectives and their methods was following the most approved methods of the modern and ancient detective of fact and fancy.

Their visit to the jail was brief. The professor received instant corroboration of his surmise. Schiller remembered driving Dr. Manx to the Waldorf about that time. Max did not display any antagonism toward his visitors. He seemed to take their friendliness for granted; he greeted Connors as an old friend. The latter, although in general he shared the professor's views about the chauffeur, had been restrained, because of his official position, from showing how he felt. This inhibition was removed after Mrs. Mooney's death. He told

Schiller directly that he believed him innocent and he encouraged the prisoner to patience and cheer.

Jimmy, when they left the prison, urged the old man to turn over to him the job of hunting up the persons who would be in a position to tell Professor Brierly what he wanted to know. The professor resisted but, with Matthews' help, was finally persuaded to leave that arduous job to the newspaperman. The latter easily traced a young man who had been happy to be accorded the privilege of helping the great Meister. But he was obdurate, he would not give Hale the information he sought. Jimmy was casting about in his mind for the apparent unreasonable obstinacy of the other, when a word was dropped that gave him the key to the difficulty. There were ethical objections against divulging the name of a patient.

Jimmy urged this man to call up Professor Brierly's home and verify his, Jimmy's, statement about his errand. At the mention of the old man's name, the young physician weakened and he finally consented to make the call.

He got Matthews on the phone. Here again a difficulty arose. The young man thought it

was wrong to divulge the name of a patient to Matthews or even to Professor Brierly himself over the telephone. Such a communication was sacred and could be divulged only in person to a man properly qualified to receive such information and that only under special circumstances. He also could not see his way clear to going over himself now because, just then he was engaged in a most intricate and delicate operation on a still more intricate and delicate patient. Finally, the big man at the other end lost patience. His voice came booming over the wire in a tone that made it distinctly audible to Jimmy standing near by.

"Listen, young feller, if you don't give Mr. Hale what he asks for, I'll come over there and slap you and your damn ethics into the middle of next week. Professor Brierly will come over for this information if you insist, because it is important and he must have it. But, if you make him come over, I'll come along with him and I'll make you go to the hospital in an ambulance and *not* as an interne. You'll decorate a stretcher."

"You young idiot, you condemned jackass!" Now there came over the wire the high shrill

voice that was so familiar to Jimmy. He did not hear any more. With a mumbled, "All right, I'll tell Mr. Hale," the young medical man hung up the receiver. He was slightly acquainted with Matthews personally, but very well by reputation. He recalled vividly a story he had heard during his college days. This related that after a wild night, Matthews had trussed up two policemen, using their uniform coats as strait-jackets for their arms and hands, and pieces of string for their feet and legs; and thus trussed, carried them to within a hundred feet of the police station and deposited them gently in the gutter.

Dr. Kyle knew that Matthews was perfectly capable of keeping his word to the letter. Hastily giving Jimmy the desired information, he breathed a sigh of relief when he saw the door close behind the persistent reporter, as he tenderly nursed his bruised feelings and ethics.

Jimmy hunted up the nearest telephone, where he told Matthews that Dr. Kyle had verified Professor Brierly's belief that Dr. Manx had visited Professor Meister. Dr. Kyle knew nothing further, since the two men had been closeted in the Austrian specialist's con-

sulting room. He then told Matthews that after a few errands he had on the upper west side, he would come to the Brierly home to get the result of the old man's cable to Professor Meister.

CHAPTER XVIII

About the time the messenger boy was delivering the reply from Vienna, a new and perhaps the most vivid chapter of this drama was being written in the Manx home high up above the Hudson River.

What lent this occurrence particular dramatic value was that several thousand persons scattered over the river and on its eastern shore were eyewitnesses. These thousands witnessed a sight and received a thrill that none of them, even the most imaginative, could have hoped for.

As this ten-thousand-eyed Argus was peering intently, morbidly, at the calm woman on the roof, there came to their eager, shocked gaze the sight of Mrs. Manx either falling off or being pushed off the roof to the ground some thirty feet below. They all gasped as they saw woman and chair leave the roof, become separated in mid-air and fall from their view to the ground. To many of these horrified witnesses the scene stamped itself on the memory

as does a slow motion-picture scene. It seemed to these later that they could distinctly pick apart each move in an episode that could not have taken more than two or three seconds.

The accumulated gasp emitted by all these sightseers, if confined to an enclosure, might have been enough literally to raise the roof.

Hysteria in all its forms was displayed by the units of this tremendous audience. The inverted amphitheater became a babel and a bedlam. Men and women shouted, wept, laughed or went into violent action. Several men and women jumped or were pushed into the river. Others were stunned to silence. One man sprang into the river and was seen swimming determinedly in the direction of the Manx home.

A mass of testimony was forthcoming from many persons of this strange audience. Much of it, as might have been expected under the circumstances, was contradictory. There were as many versions of the incident as there were persons ready to come forth to testify. The morbid thrill-hunter is not a shrinking violet. He enjoys telling of the things he sees, even more, if possible, than he enjoys seeing them.

An additional stimulus to the telling of this tale by those who witnessed it was the excellent chance of having one's name appear in the newspapers of the nation, with possibly the extreme bliss of having one's picture accompany the story.

Mrs. Manx, according to these witnesses, fell from every possible side and section of the roof.

She was pushed off by a man. This man was of all dimensions and colors. Ditto by a woman. She was pushed off by a child; by two men; by three men; by a man and a woman; by two women. Some saw this helplessly crippled woman struggle desperately with one or more assailants. From all this vague contradictory testimony the authorities gleaned the following, of which they were reasonably certain.

As Mrs. Manx was sitting close to the southeastern edge of the roof, a stooping figure emerged from behind the shed that covered the lift landing. This figure, on all fours, had crept up behind the unsuspecting woman, grabbed the back of the wheel chair and, rolling it swiftly to the edge, had pushed woman

and chair off. After this the figure had fallen or dropped prone to the floor of the roof and quickly crept back to the shelter of the shed.

Later investigation by the authorities elicited the following:

Adele Le Moyne testified that she was in her room at the time. She heard the woman and chair fall. She immediately raised an outcry and ran to the yard. Her cry brought to the scene two of the men from Connors' staff who were stationed in the house. One of these had called in the state troopers who were in and about the grounds. Someone immediately took charge and checked up on the whereabouts of every member of the household. All this, it appeared later from competent testimony which was substantially corroborated, was accomplished within not more than five minutes of the time that Adele raised her first cry.

Robert stated that he was in his room when he was attracted by the noise. He asserted that he had been in his room for upward of an hour. One of Connors' men stated that shortly after Adele's cry he saw Robert running down the stairs.

David Mooney was first seen, by one of the

state troopers, at the foot of the stairs with his baby in his arms. He stated that he had been in his room trying to amuse the baby, who was fretful. When he first heard the noise, he said, he started to go down to the lower floor, but the little one had raised an outcry; whereupon he had returned to the room, picked up the infant and was hesitating at the foot of the stairs wondering what this new thing was about. One of the plain clothes men remembered that he had heard the baby cry, but could not remember whether this crying had been prolonged or had lasted only a short time.

Mrs. Petersen had gone to Englewood, marketing. One of the troopers had driven her in one of the Manx cars. She did not return until an hour after the tragedy.

Harry had been confined to bed with a cold. He had stayed in bed in obedience to a physician's orders; two of the men remembered seeing him in bathrobe, pajamas and slippers, on the stairs. He stated that he had been asleep. He did not know what woke him up. Hearing the commotion on waking, he had put on his bathrobe and gone to the door. When he could not attract the attention of anyone to satisfy his

curiosity, he had started walking down the stairs.

Alice was in her room suffering with what the attending physician had diagnosed as shock. Although in a weakened condition, she also found her way down the stairs. She had managed to get out of bed, slip on a kimono and was first seen walking down the stairs. This was several minutes after the first outcry.

To make certain that every member of the household had been accounted for, it was ascertained that six-year-old Frank, Mrs. Manx's own son, had during the tragedy been outside, playing with one of the troopers.

At this point in the inquiry it occurred to one of the detectives to determine the position of the automatic lift, by which Mrs. Manx negotiated the several levels in the house. This was found now to be on the roof, presumably where Mrs. Manx had left it for the last time.

The detective pointed out that this was not conclusive proof that the person who had pushed her from the roof had not himself used it to reach one of the lower floors. The lift, electrically operated from a motor in the basement, was arranged to be operated from any

floor regardless of the position of the lift itself. Thus the lift might have been sent back empty to the roof, by a person from one of the lower floors. This man laid great stress on the point, showing that this was not like other similar lifts which can be operated only from within the cage itself, after all the doors are closed.

Each opening to the lift was guarded by an outer door and an inner, grilled. The fastenings on the outer doors were made high enough to be beyond the reach of the smaller boy, thus minimizing the possibility of his falling through the shaft.

This line of inquiry led to a blank wall. It was seen that it might have been possible for every person in the house at the time of the tragedy to have descended from the roof by the lift or stairs, either before or after everyone was gathered on the lower floor.

The above is a summary of five hours of the most grilling, grueling cross-examination. The matter was gone over from every possible angle. To this phase of the inquiry was applied all the combined skill of the prosecutor's staff and the Englewood police, supplemented by the able captain of the state police who happened to be

near shortly after the inquiry started. Every phase of the entire occurrence was exhaustively gone over. Everything was carefully weighed and measured. One of the troopers found what for a moment looked like a hopeful clue. He discovered on the stairs leading to the roof tiny heaps of slightly damp gravel that were identified with that which coated the floor of the roof. It had rained the day before and the slightly damp gravel had evidently stuck to the shoes of the person who had last used the stairs. This looked particularly hopeful when Adele asserted positively that she had cleaned the stairs not later than that morning.

But this faint hope grew even fainter, when, after carefully tracing the little heaps of gravel down the stairs from the roof, they faded and stopped within two feet of the stairway. The direction from the stairway was so inconclusive that no one hazarded a guess with this clue as a basis.

This faint hope died completely when Mrs. Peterson, with a positiveness equaling Adele's, declared that that young woman had *not* cleaned the stairway that morning.

CHAPTER XIX

It was not the sprightly young newspaper reporter who dragged his way wearily into the presence of Professor Brierly and Matthews the following day. This time, as on a former visit, Dr. Means, a pathologist from one of the local hospitals, was there to consult the old man.

Jimmy had been at the Manx home throughout the entire examination and search subsequent to Mrs. Manx's death. With his trained keen senses he had been unable to pick out for himself one tiny grain of comfort.

Often in the past he had left such a session with the firm belief that he had received more information from the examination than the police had. Not so this time. His normal vanity did not assert itself as it was wont to do under similar circumstances. He always told himself that if *he* had charge of the cross-examination he could have got more out of the person or persons examined than the authorities, police or lawyers, as the case might be.

This time he admitted himself totally in the

dark; a most unusual thing for this cocksure young man. Perhaps it was because of his frame of mind that he unconsciously expected to find his friend and the old man sharing this mood. He was rather mildly surprised, therefore, to see that the professor had evidently shaken off his recent nervousness, meekness and gentleness. He was his irascible old self. Jimmy entered in time to hear one of his peppery tirades against the uselessness of youth in general and his assistant in particular.

"Culture," he was snapping, "there is no such thing any more. Education has become a commercialized, institutionalized, machine-made race for athletic supremacy. In my time a boy or girl who went to college or university did so for only one reason, and that was to get an education. An institution was chosen by the matriculant for its educational traditions and qualifications with due regard for the youngster's economic condition. Look at it now.

"Stadia and bowls and fields and gymnasia instead of laboratories, lecture halls, culture courses and libraries. Now, when John L. Sullivan struck out Gene Tunney or when Abraham Attell struck down Jacob Kilrain—"

"They never did, professor," murmured Matthews. "And it is not Abraham and Jacob, it is Abe and Jake."

"They fill the newspapers with it," went on the old man, heedless of the interruption. "Whereas a great discovery in science is acknowledged by a paragraph or two; and that is usually inaccurate. Of what value is physical excellence in modern life; it is brains, culture—"

"Didn't you brutally egg me on, Professor, to assault those two toughs who crowded our car and the two women in the other car into the ditch? And didn't you enjoy it when I messed 'em up and smeared 'em over the road?"

"I admit I was hasty, perhaps. I could have discussed it with them; I could have argued with them and shown them—"

"Certainly, you could have slugged them with your culture, Professor."

The old man glared at him.

"Here is Mr. Hale. His profession is an excellent example of the degeneration of the present age and the insane emphasis placed on the physical as against the mental. There used to be Wattersons, Danas, Greeleys, on the one

hand—on the other hand, a few paragraphs on sporting events—which is all they are worth. Now there are four, six, eight, ten pages. Entire sections are given up to the theme of muscle and brute force. Even such vitally important matters from the popular point of view as the Manx case are grossly garbled and misstated. They—"

"But it was my paper that brought you the Manx case in the first place, Professor," defended Jimmy.

"Ah, yes, the Manx case." His closed hand began thumping softly on the desk. "You were there for the interviews, examinations, cross-examinations and searching, and," quizzically, "you got—?"

"Nothing, not a blame thing." And Jimmy proceeded quickly to run over the sum of the information they had obtained as a result of their examination. "Not a thing. Every person who was known to be in the house might have done it except the one-year-old infant who does not yet walk. Adele might have done it. We have only her unsupported word for what she told. She says she heard the woman and chair fall. Robert might have done it—easily.

Harry might have done it. He was not too sick to come downstairs and, therefore, not too sick to go to the roof. David might have done it. There was no corroborative proof as to the length of the child's crying, assuming that the crying was the measure of time he was out of the room. Alice might have done it.

"Why, even each of the policemen in the house at the time might have done it. Each was stationed in a position that was for the moment out of sight, apparently, of everyone else in the house. Professor, this is getting on my nerves. I'm used to such things, in fact, I get a thrill out of a corking good murder story, but somehow I've identified myself with this and I am allowing my feelings to enter into it which is not a happy frame of mind for a newspaperman out on a story. And I feel—I feel—"

"You feel that your infallible hero, Professor Brierly, is somehow slipping from his pedestal and that his feet are of clay, after all?" This was said with sardonic amusement.

"No, professor, my mind has not changed at all. I am not sloppy or demonstrative but you know how I feel. But," diffidently, "I was confident that before this the murders

would stop. It is gruesome, uncanny. I have the feeling, and the feeling is shared by most any person I meet, that the entire Manx family is doomed to extinction. And they have begun to feel that way too. Imagine living in that house now, under those conditions. Will it ever stop?"

The old man now did a thing that no one except Matthews, perhaps, had ever seen him do. He became personal in his feelings. He walked over to the young man and put his hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, Mr. Hale, it will stop. It will stop right now. There will be no more murders in the Manx family. You have been patient, loyal and long-suffering, on my account perhaps; because you believe me and in me so implicitly. I owe it to you, therefore, to tell you now, before I intended to speak, that the murders in the Manx family will stop."

"You mean," excitedly jumped up Jimmy, "that you can tell me now—"

"I mean just what I say, Mr. Hale, and I can tell you nothing further at this time. No, I'm mistaken. There is one thing more. A new development has made me change my mind about

a phase of the matter that we discussed several times. There may be, there probably will be, one more murder note, as you so euphoniously call it. But that is all there will be, one more note, but no more deaths coincident with that note."

Connors was announced and he walked in. This was not the same jaunty Connors whom Jimmy met for the first time in Harmon's office. There were rings under his eyes. His shoulders sagged. The cigar hung listlessly from his lips, it did not have the aggressive angle of yore. His hat did not perch on the side of his head as it did in former days. He slumped into a chair, which creaked under the impact.

"I rounded up them birds you told me about, professor, and they all promised to be on the job. Dr. Terhune is up there now. He'll be spelled by the others."

"Splendid! That is a relief. Now we can wait for the other note."

Jimmy looked his interest, and the old man explained. "I gave Connors a list of medical men who have volunteered for the service. They will stay up there all the time, one or another, make frequent examination of every per-

son in the house and keep them all under constant surveillance. I hardly think we need that precaution now. It is, nevertheless, wise not to take any chances.

"I was saying, Mr. Hale, that there would probably be one more note. You are wondering, of course, wondering impatiently, as is the way of youth, at what you probably call my dilatory methods."

Jimmy, with a shake of the head, was going to disclaim this but the old man, not heeding the interruption, went on.

"This case is to me more than a murder case. It has for me an interest greater and beyond the mere finding of the murderer. It has for me and the world at large a real scientific interest, although the world at large is absorbed only in the superficial aspects of what you call the dramatic and emotional human phases of it. Scientists of all lands often seek for a generation for an answer to a problem less vital than that involved here. I shall be able to elaborate it for you in a very short time, I hope.

"Men and women will come after us, Mr. Hale; many men and women. It is the function and duty of science to interpret the present

that the men and women of the future shall have our present as guideposts of their present and their future. That is the real function of scientific research.

"If by my refusal at present to divulge the name of the murderer I have caused a little suffering and distress, but thereby put a weapon into the hands of those who follow us to protect them from a great deal of suffering and distress, then I am employing my gifts as a scientist in the best possible way. Is it not so?"

Jimmy nodded mutely, at a loss for an adequate answer.

"I believe I am correct in my attitude even in the popular sense. For the sake of argument I will agree with you that science, knowledge, unless it can be practically applied to popular needs, indeed, all esoteric knowledge, is of no value. It is obviously of social importance that the possibility of the recurrence of such crimes shall be, if not eliminated, at least minimized.

"Let us assume that I accede to your unspoken request and give you for publication my theory as to the manner of these murders and their perpetrator. Suppose I weakly yielded to your wishes and I should prove wrong after all,

what then? Do you not see that by thus putting the murderer on his guard I should be defeating the very object I am attempting to achieve? Men do make mistakes, you know. I am not infallible. If I should make a mistake in this—God help us—I should, as I suggested to you some time ago, let loose what might easily be worse than any crime wave we have had to contend with in the past.

"Let me give you a concrete analogy that you can readily understand. I find a drug that will destroy certain undesirable microörganisms that infest the human body. The medical profession adopts it unanimously, assuming that because of my reputation the drug I sponsor must be of great value. The profession soon learns, however, that while it is true that it destroys the germs, as I promised, it also destroys the patient. Would it not be criminal for me to distribute such a drug without making adequate tests, not only as to its potency on the bacteria but as to its effects on the human beings to whom it will be administered?

"That is precisely the situation here, Mr. Hale. I might be doing just that if I made a premature announcement in the matter of the

Manx murders. I am now making the final test. Let me assure you that whatever the outcome, the test will be of value."

He now assumed the ironic tone with which he deprecated, equally, his own and others' weaknesses.

"Let me borrow a leaf from your sensation-loving detective. The note I spoke of is my test, of course, but permit me to make a prophecy, two prophecies. If the note materializes, whether it names a specific person or disease or not, it will have as a numeral the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet."

Only Matthews remained calm. He was too well acquainted with the professor to permit the latter's statements to startle him. Connors and Jimmy expressed their astonishment, each in his own way. Connors clenched his cigar a little tighter between his teeth. Jimmy leaned forward.

"But, professor," the latter exclaimed, "if there should be another note that could foretell only the fifth Manx death that we know of? You said the eighth letter? Let me see, there was Conrad Manx, jr.; Dr. Manx; Mrs.

Mooney, and last, Mrs. Manx. That makes four. Why the eighth?"

Matthews was smiling as the professor answered, still in the ironic, self-deprecatory tone: "That is just like the conventional detective, is it not, Mr. Hale? To make a startling prophecy? Well, since I have become a detective, hunting conventional clues in the conventional manner, I should act the part, should I not, to be in character? I will tell you something else about that note that may surprise you even more than the prophecy about it. While it will use the Hebrew character HETH, corresponding to the German gutteral CH, the writer will not really mean to use that character which is used for the numeral eight. He will mean to use the HAY, corresponding to our H, which is used for the numeral five. He will mistake one letter for the other."

Jimmy was dazed. The professor was in one of his rare moods. He was poking fun at someone. Matthews was obviously enjoying himself.

"What's that, professor?" urged Jimmy.

Professor Brierly repeated the gist of his former statement. The newspaperman shook

his head in bewilderment; Connors seemed to share in Jimmy's astonishment. The old man continued.

"Here is the other prophecy I spoke of. Although the latest reports from the Manx home are that the remaining Manxes are in fairly good health, one of them will in a very short time be suffering from diabetes."

Dr. Means, who had been an interested auditor, now asked:

"Did you say, professor, that none of them has diabetes now?"

"Yes, I did. None of them has diabetes now."

"How can you foretell, then—diabetes is a matter of slow development. It cannot be a sudden onslaught."

"Yes, it can," broke in Matthews. "Phloridzin."

Professor Brierly gave his assistant an approving nod.

"Oh!" The pathologist's face lighted up. "I see. But even so; diabetes is not necessarily fatal."

The old man smiled cryptically and answered:

"It will not prove fatal now, but it was intended to be and it might easily have been." Turning once more to Jimmy and Connors, he continued:

"The conventional thing for Connors to do now is to arrest me and charge me with the murder of the Manxes. Since I have admitted repeatedly, even insisted, that I could have killed them that way and in ways more horrible, and since I profess now to a supernatural prevision about matters like that, then I must be the guilty person. Else how could I know that a person is going to mistake the eighth letter in a dead language for the fifth letter, and foretell that someone is going to get diabetes, overnight perhaps?"

He was enjoying the dazed discomfiture of the detective and the newspaperman. Then abruptly he stood up, dropping his light mask as he would a cloak. He was now speaking sharply, incisively.

"There will be no more murders in the Manx home. This has taught us a valuable lesson, I hope. In my reading of criminology and criminal history, I have not come across

an analogous case. There is nothing like it in recorded criminal history.

"The perfect murder is, obviously, the murder that has not attracted official notice as a murder. I still insist that these and similar outrages have been perpetrated innumerable times without attracting attention. There have been, are and there probably will be a great many cases where men will employ a knowledge of modern science toward such murderous ends. This case will thus have proven its purpose; it will bring to the light of day the possibilities in this direction.

"We can now employ the gifts of modern science to circumvent such ravages on society. There will probably be one more note. That will be the end. We will then draw the curtain and remove the blight from the remaining Manxes.

"Dr. Means, our cultures must be ready. Let us finish our work. Good night." He and Dr. Means retired to the inner room.

"Doesn't he ever sleep?" marveled Jimmy. "Does he always have work to do?"

"Oh, he'll work as long as I let him," answered Matthews. "Sleep doesn't matter

when there is important work to do and everything he does is important. I don't know how he does it myself. But there you have him, as healthy, hale and hearty at seventy-odd as a boy."

Jimmy, who still appeared dazed about the professor's statement concerning the note, now exploded.

"How in the world can he foretell that someone is going to make an error and use the eighth instead of the fifth letter in the Hebrew alphabet? This almost borders on the supernatural. I can see that he knows now, or thinks he does, who the murderer is; but how can he tell that some person is going to make any such mistake?"

He shook his head in perplexity.

"Say," implored Connors, "was he kiddin' about that note?"

"He was kiddin' all right, but he wasn't kiddin' about the note. Depend on it, if the note comes, it will be about as he says."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Connors in superstitious awe. "Ain't he wonderful? Well, good night. Me for the hay. I've had a hard day an' tomorrow's another day."

All the efforts of the authorities, with reference to the latest tragedy in the Manx home, were fruitless. The house and all its inmates were now under careful supervision every hour of the day and night. The police were employed in triple shifts to guard against a possible mishap. During the night the doors to all of the rooms occupied by the inmates were under strict guard. Communicating doors between rooms were sealed.

The professor's instructions were rigidly carried out. Competent medical men, whom he knew personally, were in the house all the time. There was not an hour in the twenty-four when there was not a first-class medical man on duty. Not an inmate was permitted to leave without a guard. They were allowed perfect freedom; they were at liberty to go anywhere they chose, but a state trooper always accompanied each person—a state trooper to each person.

On the third day, Robert announced savagely that he was going to take the family away from there. He told Connors that he was going to take them all to an old camp of his father's in Maine. If the plague that seemed to have

settled on the Manx family like a black pall would follow them to the camp, why death in any form was preferable to this kind of life. He stated that just as soon as Alice recovered from her shock and could be moved at all, even on a stretcher, he would take them all away and never look on this house again.

Connors nodded sympathetically in answer to this. Connors wished secretly that Robert would carry out his intention of leaving. To the man of Connors' type, who loves action above all, this idle, vain searching and seeking was extremely distasteful.

The house seemed always now to be on the verge of an explosion. Adele and Mrs. Petersen had quarreled violently and now spoke only when the work demanded. Alice and Robert seemed to be the only ones who were on more or less friendly terms. Robert had taken to snapping at Harry at every opportunity. No one paid much attention to Frank, the six-year-old boy born to Dr. Manx and the second Mrs. Manx. Mrs. Petersen gave him only perfunctory care. All this did not seem so much hard-heartedness as irritable, unstable apathy. Each did only what work was abso-

lutely necessary. This was true of the members of the household and the domestics.

Two days after Mrs. Manx's death, Max Schiller was released. He returned to the house and took up his duties as chauffeur—glum, dour, grim and mute. He went about his work silently and spoke to no one. If he resented being accompanied everywhere by a state policeman, he did not show it.

While nothing to this effect had been said, it was tacitly understood that no one was expected to leave the house until the quarantine had been raised. Else David Mooney, probably, and Adele and the gardener, certainly would have left. They stated this emphatically a number of times. Alice was getting no better and Robert was developing a dangerously bitter mood. He stated finally that if she did not show improvement in a few more days he would take her away from there as she was, even if the trip killed her. He told the captain of the state police that he would do this in spite of the authorities; that the only way they could prevent him from carrying out this threat was by force.

CHAPTER XX

On the sixth day after the death of Mrs. Manx, the long-expected murder note came.

There was the same cheap unruled paper, the same cheap envelope, the same erratic printing made up of individual letters cut from a newspaper and pasted on the sheet. The note read:

Another Manx will soon be number ח.

Bacon, who had not been told of the professor's prophecy, at once declared this to be the eighth letter in the Hebrew alphabet, the Heth and the letter used for the numeral 8. This note also showed that it had been traced. The Hebrew character showed the deep indentation in the paper. Indeed, the paper at that point was almost torn from the pressure of the tracing.

The note stimulated Hite to electrical activity. He seemed to speak into three telephones at once. The premonitory rumbling from deep down in the bowels of the building, announcing that this edition was to be run

off, was an additional stimulus for Hite. His growled order into the mouthpiece of the instrument made the foreman at the other end jump as though he had been touched with a live wire. The rumbling ceased. Hite would have at least a "flash" on the front page of this edition with amplification to follow in later editions. Hite bit harder into the stem of his pipe; he continued barking orders, to men, to boys, to uniformed messengers, into telephones.

After five minutes more of furious activity his teeth relaxed their grip on his pipe. He had set in motion the machinery that would take care of this, the biggest story of the year. This machine would now work smoothly, efficiently, with only an occasional directive touch from his capable hands.

This news once more reached Jimmy over the telephone as he was sitting in the study of Professor Herman Brierly. He was idly rolling his fourth cigarette. Jimmy was getting tired of this story. It was becoming increasingly difficult to write a new lead every day; certainly still more difficult for every edition. The story was beginning to show signs of straining away from the front page.

His announcement of the news to Professor Brierly was received by that individual by an exclamation, an exclamation of relief, it seemed to the younger man.

Then Professor Brierly went into action that closely resembled that of "Iron Man" Hite. He also began barking orders to Matthews, to another young man, to the maid and to Jimmy. He also went to the telephone, asking for one number after another. Here he also growled terse orders. Jimmy did not know that some of these orders were given to some of the highest priced specialists in their respective lines in the country. He repeated an order to Matthews. This referred to the sectional photographs of Dr. Manx's laboratory. When the young man assured him that he had them all in his briefcase, they set forth on what for two of them was to be the last trip to the Manx home.

Professor Brierly looked about eagerly and sighed impatiently to find that they were the first arrivals. None of the men he expected had yet put in an appearance. As his eye was roaming about, his glance encountered that of Robert Manx, who was looking at him as he was looking at the others, bitterly.

A dark reddish brown smear on the back of the young man's hand attracted Professor Brierly's notice. Pointing to the young man's hand he asked, sharply:

"What's that?"

"Oh, nothing," indifferently. "That damn kid, Harry, scratched me with a pin."

The professor's reply astonished the young man. Whirling toward the outer door, where Matthews was chatting with Jimmy, the old man yelled.

"John, John, follow me downstairs with the photographs!" He walked, almost ran, toward the basement entrance and, followed by Matthews, hastened to the basement which held all or most of Dr. Manx's laboratory equipment.

Arrived there, each photograph was placed under the respective section that the photograph portrayed and both men began a methodical inspection, making a careful comparison between the respective articles and their photographs.

"Here, professor!"

The sharp eyes of the young man on the opposite side of the large compartment first detected a discrepancy between the photograph and one of the jars. In the photograph this jar

showed with only a part of the label discernible. The jar itself was now placed so that no part of the label was visible.

Without touching it, the professor leaned over and closely examined the seal that he himself had placed there. He saw at a glance that it had been tampered with. Undoubtedly the container had been opened since he had so carefully photographed it.

The old man stood erect with a sharp intake of breath.

"John," pointing at the jar, "do you see?"

The young man nodded grimly.

"John, take the young man to Meyerling at once. He is up near One Hundred-eightieth Street somewhere. Have Meyerling treat him and come right back with him."

Robert proved obdurate. When Matthews asked him to come along with him to have the scratch treated, he rebelled.

"I'm damned if I will. It's only a scratch, At any rate I don't care what it is. I'm tired of being ordered about and I'll stay right here."

"Young man,"—Robert turned and for the first time he really met the full impact of

those deeply sunken orbs. Robert's demeanor changed instantly. "It is desirable that you go with Matthews at once. No more nonsense now."

Robert meekly subsided and went out with the blond young giant.

Jimmy was a puzzled onlooker at this scene. Professor Brierly turned to him.

"No questions now. In a short time all your questions will be answered. I am going downstairs to finish an inspection. You may come along if you will."

Jimmy followed the old man to the basement and here he began to realize the possible use for the photographs. He saw these lined along beneath the tables and shelves depicting their contents.

He watched the old man curiously. Professor Brierly was walking from section to section, comparing carefully every article in the room with its respective photograph. After doing this, if the article was a container holding bacteria culture or some drug, he carefully examined the seal. In each case the seal was only a light dab of wax, hardly noticeable

by anyone intent on opening the jar. The seal would not prove the slightest obstacle but would show the professor if the article in question had been handled since he had thus marked it.

After a complete examination which took him more than half an hour, he took the jar which had attracted his and Matthews' notice, placed it on a shelf and put in its former place a similar jar which he had filled with water. This he carefully labeled, comparing the new label with that on the other jar. Then he turned to the newspaperman.

"All right, young man. I have finished here. We will now go upstairs. The men are probably here, and Matthews and Robert should be here shortly."

In the lower hall they found three men whose time could be commanded only by the very wealthy or the very influential, and a fourth whom Jimmy shortly recognized as Dr. Moyer, the man who had given him the information concerning the Hebrew alphabet.

"Ah, Mr. Hale," the latter said to Jimmy. Then he saw Professor Brierly. "How do you

do, sir," he said deferentially. "I had some difficulty understanding what the young lady meant, when she called up, but of course it is a pleasure to be of service to you and I came right over."

"Oh, yes, I am glad to meet you, Dr. Moyer. I have something interesting to show you, if you will pardon me for a moment." He went back to the basement and returned shortly bearing in his hand a thin shabby oblong book with board covers. Connors thought he recognized the book that he had seen Professor Brierly leafing when the old man was rummaging among the discarded athletic equipment.

Professor Brierly, turning the leaves rapidly, pointed to one of the pages and said to Dr. Moyer:

"This may interest you. Is this what you had in mind when you told Mr. Hale that the ALEF reminded you of something odd?"

"Ah, yes, that's it. How strange that you found it. This recalls the name. Something like Coch—Cot—Copley's, that's it. Copley's, isn't it?" He turned back to the cover and then to the title page. He appeared particularly

gratified to see that his memory had been accurate.

On the cover was the title:

Copley's Plain and Ornamental Standard
ALPHABETS

The title page—contained the following legend:

SET OF ALPHABETS
of all the various hands in modern use
Designed as a Text Book
by
FREDK S. COPLEY
GEO. F. WOODWARD
Copyright 1877
NEW YORK
EXCELSIOR PUBLISHING HOUSE
29 & 31 BEEKMAN ST.
Engraved by Korff Bros. & Co., 107 Liberty St., N. Y.

"See, Mr. Hale. If you will compare this Hebrew alphabet with any other you will see what I meant that time. The odd thing I was

trying to remember the first time you came to see me was that in this book the HAY (ה) is missing entirely. You see, the HAY (ה) is just like the HETH (ח) except that the former is open at the upper left-hand corner, whereas in this book both the HAY and the HETH are engraved alike, like the HETH.

"And, by George, see here, professor, this is curious, too. The Vov is almost a perfect RAYSH, the equivalent of our R. See—"

But Professor Brierly was now engaged with other men, and Dr. Moyer subsided.

Professor Brierly was talking to Dr. McMasters, the man who had been cabled to come and submit his diagnosis of a member of one of the reigning families of Europe.

"Did you find any of them suffering with diabetes?"

Dr. McMasters shook his leonine head.

"Did you see any of them?"

"I saw the young woman, just examined her superficially. There is a young idiot up there, attending physician, I believe, who made a fuss about not having asked for a consultation. But I saw her. I shall have to go over her more carefully. I am not certain but from my

superficial examination I should say she is suffering from pernicious anæmia. She is—"

"What! Pernicious anæmia!" Professor Brierly whirled with blazing eyes to Dr. Terhune, one of the men who had volunteered at Professor Brierly's request to keep constant watch on the inmates of the house.

"Pernicious anæmia! I was given to understand she was suffering from shock. How could you mistake one for the other?" with bitter reproach. "I asked you to serve because I thought you knew something. A fresh-laid graduate could diagnose pernicious anæmia. It cannot be a sudden onslaught; it is a disease of long slow development. What were you—"

The words came from the lips of the old man like bullets from a machine gun, and with the same deadly effect. His anger was mounting until he was trembling with wrath. Dr. Terhune reddened with anger and embarrassment.

"But, professor," he pleaded. "I never saw the young woman. The attending physician insisted that *he* had not asked for a consultation and that the family had not asked either me to attend, or him to consult me. He talked of ethics—"

"What!" The old man turned and glared at that young man who had been attracted by the raised voices in the hall.

"Ethics!" he almost spat the word. "Your first ethical duty is to your patient, not to your own petty little vanity. How dare you countermand an order given by Professor Brierly in a case of this kind?—McMasters," he urged the big man, "go up there and finish your examination, as quickly as you can, please. We'll wait."

Then he turned once more to the young physician.

"You are an ass. You know that Terhune and others I sent here are often consulted by better men than you can ever hope to be. The first duty of a physician is to be broad-minded, tolerant, self-effacing.

"Oh," he continued, clenching his hands in impotent wrath. "It is all my own fault, waiting for the chance to give a theatrical demonstration like a cheap charlatan. I thought I had good reason for this. I am a fool, a mummified, fossilized jackass, a scientific, creaky, rusty, inhuman thinking machine. Thinking of the future of science, of posterity when

this dear human vital child may—" He whirled again on the young physician and said in deadly tones:

"If this child dies you—you—" He became incoherent and paced up and down nervously, watching the stairway impatiently.

Just then Matthews and Robert came through the door. A reassuring nod from his young assistant seemed to calm the old man and afforded him some relief. During this lull, while they were waiting for the verdict of Dr. McMasters, the young physician began furtively sidling toward the door.

"You stay here!" snapped the old man. "We may need you. Your carcass may be useful at any rate." At this the young man took a long sighing breath as one does prior to plunging into a cold pool and walked determinedly toward the door.

Matthews was leaning negligently against the lintel.

"Better not, doctor," he advised gently. "I just came in and don't know what it's all about, but I heard the professor advise you to stay here. People are usually wise to take his advice."

This was said with an air of such innocent good-feeling that the young medical man was deceived. He attempted to crowd past the young giant at the door.

Two long iron arms reached out, grasped him by the upper arms, lifted him easily, as easily carried him two steps into the hall and slammed him into an armchair with such force that the furniture protested creakingly.

Except for a barely perceptible, additional glint in Matthews' eye, his face did not change. It still retained its good-humored exterior.

"Better be advised, doctor, and stay here. I might break some furniture next." After a short smiling scrutiny he turned away as Dr. McMasters was seen coming down the stairs.

"The prognosis—" asked Professor Brierly, eagerly.

"At bottom a sound young animal," murmured Dr. McMasters calmly. "Transfusions, rest, care—decidedly it looks hopeful."

Professor Brierly whirled again on the young physician sitting in the large chair. The old man pointed a quivering finger at him.

"You,"—his voice was again rising in uncontrollable wrath—"you will submit to a test

and if your blood is of the proper type, you will donate some to help save the child's life. And," he was continuing in a bitter voice, "because I am perhaps as much at fault as you, even more perhaps, I shall also submit to a test and if mine is of the proper type, I shall insist on giving all that is needed.

"Go down to the laboratory and have the test made now," icily. "Everything possible will be done to save the girl's life. I am coming down shortly."

The young man protested weakly. "I do not mind submitting to the test and giving what is needed, but this is highly irregular. I do not like to be coerced that way. The law—"

"I'm the law here just now," boomed Connors' voice. "And what the professor says goes. He's boss here for the time bein'. If he says you give some blood, you give it, see? I'll give some of mine if it'll help the kid."

CHAPTER XXI

PROFESSOR BRIERLY, with a gentleness rare for him, spoke to the young girl in her bed. He sat on the bed and talked soothingly, gently, of inconsequentials, apparently; of her school, of what she ate, drank, her amusements. They talked of the various things that are sent to the girls from their homes.

Alice received a box of nut candy regularly every week, a brand she liked particularly. She laughingly told the old man that mixed nut candy was a compromise. She liked chocolate-coated almonds particularly. Each box of candy contained only about six or seven almonds, the candy she liked most.

"Because," she smilingly said, "if they were all almonds I should make a pig of myself. They thought if they were all almonds I would not share any of the candy with the other girls. Perhaps they were right. I certainly should not have shared as much with the other girls as I did. But you bet they didn't get any of the almonds."

Under the influence of his magnetic personality, Alice shook off for a time the terrible depression under which she, as all other members of the family, was suffering. She went on talking and Matthews would have been surprised if he could have seen his mentor and foster father just now.

"Have you any of that candy left?" he asked her.

"Oh, yes. A whole box. You see I could not eat any of it since I was ill."

The talk rambled on for a little while longer and then the old man stood up.

"I'll take that box of candy with me," he announced. "But I promise not to eat any of the almonds." He withdrew, taking the candy with him.

"Almonds," he murmured as he was going down the stairs. "Of course that would be it—" He joined the other men.

"Dr. McMasters, have you found anyone suffering with diabetes?"

"Not yet," answered the big man, and went on about his appointed task. Professor Brierly followed him to the upper floor and busied himself among Mrs. Manx's effects.

When he returned to the lower floor, a young man whom Dr. McMasters had brought with him was handing his chief some sheets of paper on which were the results of analyses he had made in the basement.

After glancing at the sheets of paper, Dr. McMasters nodded.

"You were right, professor. Mr. Mooney is suffering from diabetes."

"But how—" protested Dr. Terhune. "I examined him only last night, we all did. He did not show a sign then—"

"Of course not," snapped Professor Brierly. "He did not have it then, but he has it now." Then as Dr. Terhune was about to interrupt him, "This is no reflection on you, Terhune. I knew when I sent you that I could leave the matter safely in your hands."

"But how—" murmured Dr. Terhune weakly. "And diabetes is not necessarily fatal."

"No, it is not, but it is a piece of the entire devilish mosaic. We shall go into that phase of it later. Let us now finish what we came here for. The Manx plague is at an end. Let us go into Dr. Manx's study."

They all followed him into that ill-fated room and seated themselves.

Professor Brierly sat for a long time in the chair formerly occupied by the murdered master of the house. He appeared reluctant to begin what was, obviously for him, a distasteful task. Finally, heaving a slight sigh, he began:

"First, let us take the death of Dr. Manx. I surmised a catapult almost at once. I demonstrated that the nature of the injury made any other weapon almost unthinkable.

"Max knew of the catapult. He helped make it. But to tell us of it would have been either to make himself a suspect or charge the murder inferentially to someone else, neither of which he was willing to do. I was here yesterday and with Max's help made a catapult similar to the one that is missing.

"The projectile that killed Dr. Manx was propelled by the catapult from the roof!

"I have rigged up the catapult on the roof where it is now all set to repeat what the other one did to Dr. Manx. Max also helped me in this."

His eyes roamed about the room and through

the sliding doors to the other room. Here he saw a heavy plaster cast of Plato.

"We will now put a number of books and other objects on this chair on which we will mount the cast, so that it will occupy approximately the same position as that occupied by Dr. Manx's head when he sat in his characteristic position. The safest place for you gentlemen to watch this experiment will be from the yard, well to one side of a line drawn from here to the door of the garage."

They went out into the yard, and Professor Brierly mounted to the roof of the house. He appeared shortly at the roof's edge and nodded as if satisfied with the position they had assumed.

"Now watch!" he called.

Some glued their eyes to the window. Others looked upward.

The latter suddenly saw an object, at the end of a rope, rise above the roof with incredible velocity. This object described a giant arc, and continued describing the arc, limited by the rope with undiminished speed. The other end of the rope was apparently fastened to the roof beyond the sight of the watchers. The

velocity of the object at the end of the rope was such that it was almost too great for the eye to follow.

The rope flattened out on the roof; the object at its free end continued with undiminished speed outward and downward, the rope flattened out against the rear of the building and the object at the end of this gigantic lash whipped through the closed window with a crash, shortly to reappear hanging taut at the end of the rope, oscillating gently.

The men rushed forward and crowded to the window. There was not a sign of the plaster bust, but the floor, table, chairs and other articles of furniture were strewn with hundreds of fragments of plaster of Paris.

Professor Brierly appeared at the edge of the roof.

"Come up here and I'll show you."

They all hastened through the house and crowded into the lift which took them to the roof. When they arrived there he was stretching the rope taut behind a staple to which it was firmly fixed. When the rope was stretched, the free end was near the front edge of the roof where, affixed to the roof by bolts, stood a

catapult. This engine pointed almost straight upward, with a very slight inclination toward the rear of the house.

"See." The professor pointed. "This rope is taut. I have at the end of it in the toe of this stocking a stone a little larger than a baseball. I tied a piece of string around the stocking above the stone, although hardly necessary. I now put it into the catapult which is aimed upward in the direction of the garage door, in perfect line with the window. The force of the catapult will shoot it almost straight upward, but the pull of the rope on that staple will prevent it from going straight upward. Also, it will not jerk, as it would if I propelled it straight upward or straight outward from the staple. No, this counterforce will make it describe the arc you saw. Whirl a watch-chain and see the undiminished speed with which it will wind itself around your finger, to the very end. Same principle involved here. The initial impetus on the end of the watch chain is not *around* the finger, but straight ahead or upward as it is here. This staple acts like the finger on the chain.

"Now I go to the rear of the roof and hold

this piece of string which is attached to the catch that will release the stone. When I get the proper signal that Max, who is deaf in one ear, is listening to the motor with the other, with his back turned this way, and the three men talking to the doctor have left— Step away," he cautioned. The men cleared the path. "I pull this string thus."

There was a dull thud, a deep, vibratory hum and the men saw a blur, the rope flattened out and the stone disappeared. After a short time the tightness of the rope slackened.

Awe, amazement, fear, held his audience spellbound. In the professor there was to be observed none of the gloating to be expected in a man staging such a display. He did it all as impersonally as though he were demonstrating a chemical reaction in the classroom. If there were any feeling at all, it was grief and exhaustion, emotional exhaustion.

"We might as well finish this," he said slowly. "Come down to the laboratory and we will get through.

"The first error that was made," he continued as they were all seated in the laboratory,

"was in having the catapult destroyed. The second error—and these were the only two I know of—was in having the ergotized flour destroyed, instead of replaced with good flour. If I needed any further evidence, which I did not, these would have convinced me.

"It is perfectly obvious how those shutters and windows came to be broken. Those were the result of tests made for velocity and direction. You saw"—turning to Connors, Matthews and Jimmy—"the abrasions on the lower edges of the window frame, particularly the upper frame. That frame, when both windows were raised, is the one that would receive almost the full impact of the rope when it whipped around them. When these tests were made they were made with the lower window open. The projectile would whip around the lower frames and break the shutter and window from *inside*. The stone you found, Mr. Connors, was probably used in one of these tests. The stone presumably slipped out of the rope, hit the heavy book-end, which was about in line with the position normally assumed by the doctor's head, caromed off and struck the beam. I

determined the direction from which the beam was bruised by some tests I made on miniature beams of the same kind of wood.

"Your difficulty, Mr. Connors, was that you tried to trace the projectile back from the doctor's head in a straight line. You made up your mind, or rather your mind was subconsciously made up by many experiences and observation, that such a projectile must travel in a straight line. You therefore traced it directly back from the doctor's head to the garage door and Max Schiller, where you knew him to be at the time of the occurrence.

"I, on the other hand, traced the projectile to where the signs, you call them clues, led. That was to the roof above this room. A scientist's mind will travel wherever his experiments will lead. Sometimes this path will be a curve; at other times it will be a crooked or an oblique line. The scientist's mind will shut out everything but the evidence before it. There were other factors. These experiments for direction and velocity had to be made in the daytime.

"There was a window directly above the window that was broken. There was a room directly above the room in which Dr. Manx

was killed. How could these tests in daylight hours be made without the knowledge of the occupant of that room? The occupant of that room also spent many of the daylight hours on the roof.

"Who was the occupant of that room?

"Mrs. Manx, with her own hands, crippled as she was, propelled the projectile from the catapult on the roof!"

CHAPTER XXII

AFTER a brief pause, Professor Brierly went on.

"Mrs. Manx murdered Conrad Manx, Dr. Manx and her step-daughter, Mrs. Mooney. A Frankenstein of her own creation murdered her. And because

" 'The evil that men do lives after them
And the good is oft interred with their bones,'

Mrs. Manx, from her grave, tried and nearly succeeded, in murdering Alice and then, still from the grave, she tried unsuccessfully to murder Robert, here, and David Mooney. And—only the grave hides from us just what she intended for the rest of the family. To round out the Shakespearean quotation fully, Dr. Manx, who probably had an inkling of the truth and was prepared to stop these murders, had what good he might have planned, buried with him."

He paused briefly and directed a long, level glance at Robert, who had stirred restlessly at the beginning as if about to interrupt. The

deeply sunken eyes of the old man seemed to have a quieting effect on him.

Professor Brierly went on.

"There is no need to go into a detailed history of all the unfortunates of this household. The newspapers have done that superabundantly," with an ironic glance in Jimmy's direction.

"Mrs. Manx led a thwarted life. Thwarted in what hopes she might have had during her first marriage. She was not happy with her first husband, who died. She met Dr. Manx, who was their family physician before she married her first husband and during the time she lived with her first husband. Her relations with Dr. Manx at that time are hidden and it is perhaps best that they be hidden. She married Dr. Manx. A year and a half later she gave birth to a child.

"Under the very best conditions, there is usually at least a modicum of restraint and strain under such circumstances. Shortly after the birth of her child she suffered an attack of poliomyelitis, which left her hopelessly paralyzed below the hips.

"This added to the difficulty. She was

thereby robbed of the social position she, a brilliant, beautiful, cultured woman, would fill as the wife of the nationally known Dr. Manx.

"She also lost the society of her husband. Some of the innuendo prevalent about his amorous affairs is known to you. She probably had the consciousness that if she could attract him while she had a husband living and he a wife, then other women might also prove attractive to him.

"Here you have the very essence of the devil's brew. Thwarted ambition, social and otherwise, thwarted love, jealousy, justified or not; a child of her own, who under the best circumstances could not take the same place in the affections of the household he might have had with full brothers and sisters or with none of these. This child would fall heir to only a small part of the moderate Manx fortune. Physicians, at best, do not pile up huge fortunes.

"Then came something else. She became very friendly with Robert. It was innocent, I am certain. It was simply two persons of different temperaments, both positive tempera-

ments, with some tastes in common. She was also thwarted in that. That finished it.

"She had plenty of time, with nothing to do to distract her mind from her own troubles. She probably magnified those troubles, as humans will do; she began to plan. She had many years in which to perfect these plans. She had the doctor's extensive library to fall back on for suggestions and advice as to her plans.

"But she was handicapped. She, unaided, could do nothing. So she fashioned a tool, an instrument with which to accomplish her designs. This tool was most diabolic in its conception and most deadly in execution.

"This tool, gentlemen, was a twelve-year-old boy, her step-son.

"Our knowledge of the human mind, in normal health and in disease, is still sketchy and vague. We say, for example, that a person suffering from hysteria is susceptible to hypnotic suggestions, slightly less so a person suffering from an obsession. We say positively that an insane person, a child suffering from dementia præcox, cannot under any circum-

stances be hypnotized. But we have great difficulty at times in drawing the line of demarcation between hysteria and obsession and some forms of insanity.

"On my first visit here I noticed that Harry was suffering from some nervous disorder. This would not be apparent to a layman, but it was to me. So pronounced was it that I made up my mind that Dr. Manx, fine diagnostician that he was, must have noticed it also. Yet, while Dr. Manx had the eye and mind of a physician, he had the emotions of a father, and our intellect is often clouded by our emotions. That is why a physician or surgeon rarely treats members of his own family.

"I made a small test on the boy without his knowledge and learned that he was an easy hypnotic subject. Whether he is suffering from hysteria or obsession, one of these gentlemen will shortly determine."

He nodded toward the two men who had not taken part in the proceedings. Neither of them had a superior in the country, one as a neurologist and the other a psychiatrist.

"You heard some members of the household complain on some of our visits that Harry was

'pesky,' 'peevish,' 'cranky,' 'a pest.' All this will often pass unnoticed because these adjectives are applied to perfectly normal, healthy boys. But of that later. I shall demonstrate just what Harry did.

"When the boy denied knowledge of the broken windows and shutters, he lied, of course. Assuming that he was not guilty, it is hardly conceivable that such a series of apparently mysterious events would occur in a house without a boy of his age being aware of it. Mrs. Manx, you remember, implied that Max and Adele lied about the broken windows and shutters. The doctor's death was premature; that is, I do not believe it was planned to take place so early. Probably, in the woman's mind, there was a desire to keep him alive for the time being in the event of suspicion as to the inexplicable deaths she had planned. Who more susceptible to suspicion than a physician?

"When Mr. Hale, Mr. Connors and Mr. Harmon came to tell the doctor about the first and second notes, she already knew of their existence, as the doctor did, from Mr. Hale's paper. She knew that so far as making the doctor a suspect, then, the game was up. She

also had reason to fear the doctor more than the police. When Harry gave her the proper signal—

"Her engine of destruction was ready, the propitious moment was at hand. She pulled the trigger!

"My searches and final cable to Meister showed me that the doctor had consulted him about the boy. She knew it, too, probably. That is why she had reason to fear the doctor. It would not be easy, after all, to accomplish all those murders with the keen eye of one of America's greatest diagnosticians ever about.

"I also found the book with the queer Hebrew characters, in a place that convinced me that it was Harry's. The book was in a chest filled with boys' discarded things, athletic uniforms of all kinds, broken tennis racquets, all kinds of athletic equipment, Conrad's, Robert's and Harry's. The little boy Frank's toys, either in use or discarded—none of these were in the chest. Who was more likely to be the frequenter of such a chest or hiding place than the youngest boy? Of course I considered that point in connection with all the rest. That alone, if none of the other factors by them-

selves, would have been enough to convince me.

"Only a woman, I believe, could have done this. Only a woman has the histrionic ability to act the part she did, and only a woman could not only deceive others so completely, but could deceive herself as to the justification of her acts.

"Imagine using a boy as an instrument to kill his father, his brothers, his sisters! Finally, the Frankenstein she created turned on her and destroyed its creator. She had used her hypnotic influence, which had taken years to acquire, over the boy to destroy others; but, she did not know much more of the human mind than most of us. The human mind is an unstable factor. She created in the boy's mind an obsession, which finally destroyed her.

"Now I will permit the instrument himself to demonstrate.

"Hypnotism is a subject on which there is not much exact information. It is not the all-powerful weapon for ill or good that some charlatans claim for it; nor is it the inadequate fraud that some of its critics say it is. Properly employed, it can be of great benefit.

"The objection is not a valid one that, on

the several occasions when he must have done her bidding, Harry could not have been directly under the influence of the hypnotizer. Time and space may make that objection seem a sound one. The factor that invalidates it is that post-hypnotic suggestion operates as powerfully and potently as direct hypnotic suggestion. The subject need not be in a hypnotic sleep or trance to obey the hypnotizer. An order can be given to be carried out much later, and the order is obeyed. In this case we have the several instances of orders being carried out even after the death of the hypnotizer, as I shall show you.*

"Dr. Forsythe, gentlemen," pointing to one

* *On the Witness Stand,* Hugo Munsterberg (Clark Boardman Co.), page 219:

"How far does the full hypnotic state itself fall within the realm of criminal action? One aspect offers itself at once; the hypnotized person may become the powerless instrument of the criminal will of the hypnotizer. He may press the trigger of the gun, may mix the poison into the food, may steal and forge and yet the real responsible actor is not the one who commits the crime but the other one who is protected and who directed the deed by hypnotic suggestion. All that has been demonstrated by experiment a hundred times. . . . The possibilities of such secret crimes seem to grow, moreover, in an almost unlimited way through the so-called posthypnotic suggestions. The opportunity to perform unwillingly a crime in the hypnotic sleep itself is in practical life, of course, small and exceptional. *But the hypnotizer can give the order to carry out the act at a later time: a few hours or a few days after awaking.*" (The italics are mine. W.L.)

of the men who had been an interested spectator, "is our most distinguished neurologist. He and Dr. Carson," nodding toward the other man, "who is to psychiatry what Dr. Forsythe is to neurology, may be able to tell us shortly what is wrong with Harry.

"Dr. Forsythe often makes use of mental suggestion, hypnotism, if you will. He can hypnotize Mrs. Manx's terrible instrument, if she could and she did. Matthews, lie down on the couch there. Connors, will you bring down the boy?"

When Harry came down hesitantly, Dr. Forsythe called him to him. As the boy approached, he was attracted by a thin beam of light streaming from a tiny electric torch, with which Dr. Forsythe was idly toying.

They got into chat as man and boy will and talked of those matters that such a couple of strangers will often discuss. Harry was sulky at first, but he became less self-conscious after a while. During all this time the doctor kept toying with the torch from which the boy could not keep his eyes.

The doctor's words came more slowly. He finally stopped talking. Then Harry fell si-

lent, staring at the torch, the rays of which had been constantly kept in his face.

Dr. Forsythe had beside him on a small table a large wad of absorbent cotton and an empty four-ounce bottle, tightly corked, labeled "chloroform." He now took a book of paper matches from his pocket and tearing out one of them he laid it beside the other two articles. Pushing these toward the boy he said, slowly, distinctly:

"Harry, show us what you did to Conrad," pointing at the reclining figure of Matthews.

The boy took the three articles without hesitation and put the bottle in his pocket. Approaching the recumbent figure on tiptoe, he circled the couch until he was at its head. Here he leaned and listened for a moment, apparently to make certain that the figure was asleep. Then he took the bottle from his pocket and going through the motions of saturating with its contents the wad of cotton, he carefully carried it near the face of the reclining figure. He brought this gradually closer until he finally applied it firmly to Matthews' nose and mouth.

After a while he removed the cotton and ex-

amined Matthews' head carefully, as if looking for a definite spot. Over it, his hand, now holding the match, hovered for an instant; then, suddenly, it darted downward. A moment later his thumb went through the motions of pressing home the barrel of a hypodermic needle.

Then he turned and walked away, still on tiptoe but more quickly this time, until halted by the beam of light that struck his face. Under its influence he now walked straight to Dr. Forsythe. The last part of the distance was made less cautiously.

Dr. Forsythe, pointing at several cartons lying near the table, said: "Harry, show us what you did with the catapult."

Walking rapidly to the cartons, the boy picked up one of them; then quickly, but furtively, with frequent looks over his shoulder, put the carton into the furnace which was separated from the laboratory by a wall. Then with the same hasty stealth, he repeated this with the other two cartons.

Once more, as he was walking away, the beam from the torch seemed to act as a magnet

and he came to Dr. Forsythe's side. The latter looked at Professor Brierly, who shook his head. Dr. Forsythe asked the boy to sit down, which he did and was thereafter apparently oblivious to what was going on about him.

CHAPTER XXIII

PROFESSOR BRIERLY looked at Dr. Forsythe and Dr. Carson. Both these men looked at each other. Dr. Carson spoke.

"A fine hypnotic subject, certainly not insane." He looked inquiringly at his colleague. Dr. Forsythe nodded slowly.

"Hysteria, perhaps; probably obsession. Probably curable. He has a fine body, and you say he has a history of a normally healthy mind until recently?"

"Yes," answered Professor Brierly. "So far as I could gather."

"Professor," interrupted Matthews. "How could she foretell that the baby would need an operation in which either chloroform or ether was indicated? The first note foretold meningitis. How could she foretell that this opportunity would be afforded her? Or did she in some way produce that in the baby and—"

Professor Brierly shook his head.

"No, not that. That was a fortuitous coin-

cidence of which she was able to take advantage. You remember that Adele and Mrs. Petersen told us that Mrs. Manx had a toothache some time before the baby was ill. This toothache, which was probably assumed, we were told was in a filled tooth. The tooth being filled, the dentist would not question her statement that it hurt, as he might if it were a sound tooth. He would have no reason to question her.

"Such a tooth may hurt without any indication, either clinical or by X-ray. In such a case the only clinical evidence the dentist has is the pain. He takes the patient's word for it, particularly if it be an intelligent patient. She could not go to the dentist; the dentist could not bring his apparatus to the house for removing the filling and treating and refilling. So extraction was the logical procedure. Her request that she wanted a general anæsthetic was sufficient in this as it is in most cases when a patient insists on a general anæsthetic.

"Provided her condition was such that a general anæsthetic was not contra-indicated, neither her husband nor the dentist would object. Thus that phase of it was taken care of.

and you heard her logical reason for wishing it done at night.

"She had thus provided a way, at the mere cost of a tooth, to give her instrument an opportunity to do his terrible work on Conrad.

"When we questioned Robert as to the night on which the Mooney baby was operated, he told us that he saw Conrad on the roof. When pressed he was not certain that it was Conrad. When I asked him how the person on the roof was dressed, he said: 'Oh, the usual togs, knickers and so forth.' It was a foggy night, you remember, when objects are considerably magnified and almost any male figure in knickers might have looked like Conrad to Robert, just then.

"A psychological factor enters into this. Our minds accept without resistance the usual, the commonplace, the expected. He saw a figure in knickers on the roof. Later he saw his father in the hall and spoke to him of the baby's operation. Harry was usually in bed at that time of the night. David was also accounted for. Ergo, who could it be on the roof but Conrad?

"It was Harry that he saw on the roof.

Harry prowling about awaiting an opportunity, under that woman's hypnotic spell, to do her terrible work. I did not need this demonstration and the one to come, gentlemen, to convince me of the correctness of my reasoning. This demonstration is put on that others may in the future profit by this horror that visited the Manx family.

"I feel particularly free to do this because we have arrived at a much more humane method of treating such cases. We realize that a boy like this is a medical, not a criminal, subject. Fortunately the bloody days of criminal jurisprudence are past. In the seventeenth century a boy of eight was hanged in England for setting fire to two barns. Much later a boy of ten was hanged in that same enlightened country for murdering a bedfellow. As late as eighteen-twenty-eight a boy of twelve was executed in New Jersey on his own confession for murder. It is because I know that Harry will be treated by wise physicians, instead of stern judges, that I feel thus free to speak.

"Now I will show you how this Frankenstein she created turned on its creator. This and subsequent acts are probably due to obsession."

He looked at Dr. Forsythe for confirmation. The latter nodded affirmatively.

"John, sit in that chair. Ask him, doctor, what he did to his mother."

Dr. Forsythe had put away his light. He now turned to the boy, who had sat quietly throughout all this.

"Harry," ordered Dr. Forsythe, pointing at Matthews. "Show us what you did to your mother."

The boy walked eagerly toward Matthews. Arrived there he climbed to the young man's lap and began to fondle him. The spectators waited with bated breath for the culmination of this terrible episode. The boy kept on fondling the big man, Professor Brierly watching intently. Then a shade of disappointment swept across his features when the boy continued petting what for the time being was to him, his mother. At last the professor's face cleared.

"Dr. Forsythe," he called. "Ask him what he did to his stepmother on the roof; not mother, stepmother."

"That is your stepmother, Harry," called out Dr. Forsythe. "What did you do to her on the roof?"

A remarkable transformation instantly came over the boy. He stiffened and dropped off Matthews' lap. The baby face became feral and feline in its ferocity. He dropped down on all fours and crept quickly and stealthily around to the back of the chair. He looked as a stalking tiger must look, with the additional ferocity that the human countenance can impart. The boy was now all evil, the personification of murderous desire.

When he was at the back of the chair he crept slowly and ever more slowly and cautiously without making a sound. Arrived at the chair, he slowly lifted one hand and put it lightly on one of the legs and then followed it with the other hand. Here, he cautiously braced himself and then burst into explosive action.

He gave the chair such a violent push that Matthews, big and agile as he was had to scramble to save himself from falling.

A pent-up sigh, the result of many persons holding their breath, went up from the assembled men. Jimmy Hale, hardened newspaperman, found himself trembling as if with the ague. Connors, hard-boiled, inured to hard-

ships in himself and others, familiar with ugly sights and scenes, exponent of the third degree with recalcitrant prisoners, almost fainted. The others were variously affected. Robert had his hands over his face and no one could see his features.

Professor Brierly nodded and Dr. Forsythe once more called the boy to sit down. Again he sat there quietly during the subsequent dialogue.

Professor Brierly resumed:

"We do not know at this time, nor shall we ever know, just what happened, whether the boy, being hysterical was thus a ready plastic subject to be molded to the woman's will, or whether her evil influence started it and ended with the boy having a well-defined obsession. What happened with respect to the warning notes must be obvious.

"Along with his perverted mind, there was a desire to brag about his evil acts, even though the boasting had to be done in secret. He had the book in which he found those odd Hebrew characters. The poor little unfortunate did not know, of course, that the engraver of those letters did not know much more of Hebrew

than he himself did. Probably it seemed to his perverted mind, tortured by that terrible woman, that this way of sending the communications would be sufficiently bizarre to satisfy his morbid imagination.

"The sending out of these letters may seem an act of unusual precocity for a boy of Harry's age, and yet it is nothing compared with the mature ingenuity displayed by many children suffering from similar ailments, all duly recorded in medical history.

"Mrs. Manx was apprised of the existence of those notes by the paper, as you know. She took care that there were no more notes. Once she was gone I knew, of course, that the notes would continue, just as I knew that he should take that engraver's word for it that the eighth letter in the Hebrew alphabet was the fifth letter and was used for the numeral five.

"Mrs. Mooney died of ergotized bread. I explained that to some of you. With regard to this Mrs. Manx made her second error. She probably directed the boy to destroy the remaining flour and wash the container, instead of replacing the ergotized flour with good flour. But even then she did not go far enough. The

missing flour was damning evidence, as was the missing catapult. I actually found among the effects in her room a quantity of ergotized rye.

"This is the way she probably did it. Either she herself or Harry mixed a quantity of this ergotized rye with the whole wheat flour. And, terrible to relate, she used Dr. Manx as an unconscious instrument to help kill his daughter. I found among his papers a note on a microscopic examination he had made for her as to the amount of ergot in a measured quantity of rye flour she gave him to analyze. Just how she did this, whether she obtained ergotized rye somewhere or whether she manufactured it by permitting it to get wet and moldy, enters into the field of speculation, just as does the matter of the boy's illness. At any rate, it is not now of material importance and I do not indulge in that kind of speculation. I am a scientist.

"Her poor little instrument was driven by his obsession to carry out her appointed task even after her death, as witness the sudden onslaught of diabetes, overnight, which overtook Mr. Mooney. Depend on it, he did not have diabetes last night. Dr. Terhune is absolutely reliable. And there were three others I had

sent up to relieve Dr. Terhune. They could not all be mistaken.

"Matthews was right when he suggested phloridzin. I was able to foretell the possibility of diabetes being found here. The day after Mrs. Manx was killed, I came here and found that a phial of phloridzin among the doctor's effects had been disturbed. I came up here every day after that. I had plainly marked all the containers with a light dab of wax. I could thus tell if any of them had been opened. The wax did not seal them effectively but it would break if the container was opened.

"Phloridzin," he continued, speaking for the benefit of the laymen present, "is a sweetish drug obtained from the bark of certain fruit trees. Although it has no place in the pharmacopœia, it has a definite place in research. It is used to give diabetes to animals for the purpose of experiment."

The young medical man, who had by this time recovered from his pique, had been an interested spectator and listener during the last stages of the demonstration. He now leaned forward.

"Professor, I did not know of phloridzin.

But why diabetes? It is not necessarily fatal."

"No, it is not fatal, but too large a dose of insulin is fatal. It causes death by shock. Insulin, gentlemen, is a specific used for the treatment of diabetes. Here is what I found in Mrs. Manx's room, also among her effects." He held up a package with the seal broken and a hypodermic syringe.

"Insulin is injected. Many intelligent persons administer it themselves, without the aid of a physician. Harry, who had been ordered, under hypnotic influence, prior to Mrs. Manx's death, to administer this to someone, had only the obsession after her death, without the knowledge of the insulin. This knowledge she probably kept to herself. So there you are. I could have Harry demonstrate this as he did the other murders, but it would only weary you unnecessarily and would weary him. Phloridzin is a sweetish liquid, a few drops of which, can easily be disguised in many articles of diet; tea, coffee, almost anything.

"Alice has pernicious anæmia. My friend Dr. McMasters is almost as conservative an old fogy in such matters as I am. When he says 'hopeful,' a wise insurance company would

issue a policy at reasonable rates, if the insurance company knew him as I do.

"I had a chat with Alice. The gist of what I drew from her is that a splendid plan was employed to make her eat a certain definite amount of poisoned candy every week. Since the ingenious scheme involved almonds, chocolate-coated, chances are that the drug used was some form of benzol. One of this group is nitrobenzol, an artificial substitute for oil of bitter almonds used in flavoring extracts. Either a sweet or a bitter almond would, therefore, disguise the taste of the drug perfectly.

"Some of this candy was left in her room. I brought it away and, because I suspected the poison used, it was easy to make a test quickly. It was as I guessed. Mr. Hale and Mr. Connors made a similar experiment with me before; and, since they are still alive, I shall trouble Mr. Connors again; or will it be Mr. Hale? Here, Mr. Hale," reaching out half of a chocolate-coated almond.

The same hesitancy, to be met with the same rare smile as on a former occasion, caused the reporter determinedly to take the candy and put it into his mouth, and with the same deter-

mination chew and swallow it. No one smiled; the entire affair was too ghastly.

"How do you like it, Mr. Hale?"

"Pretty good; rather a high flavor, I imagine."

"I dare say that is just what you are doing, you are imagining. I am not certain how it would taste if I had not told you what it contained. At any rate, if you ate enough of this over an extended period of time, you would finally succumb—to pernicious anæmia.

"But I weary you, gentlemen. I shall give you one more demonstration that the 'evil that men do lives after them,' how even in death Mrs. Manx was a very dangerous woman.

"When I came in today, I noticed that Robert had painted the back of his hand with iodine. When I asked what it was he told me that Harry had scratched him with a pin. You can readily imagine that I did not feel happy over it. The purpose of these photographs is obvious"—he waved his hand at the photographs ranged about the room. "But I had taken another precaution. First, I put beyond Harry's reach anything that might cause instant death. The other drugs and cultures I left in-

tact, because there is rather a valuable collection here. I made certain, as I explained, that I could detect any tampering.

"When Robert told me that Harry had scratched him with a pin, I came down here with Matthews and found that one of the containers, besides the phloridzin, had been tampered with. I put this aside and substituted another, holding harmless water. We will now let Harry demonstrate for the last time what the influence of his stepmother made him do, even after death.—Dr. Forsythe."

Dr. Forsythe turned to the boy. Holding out another paper match, he said:

"Harry, show us what you did to Robert."

Harry took the match and went unerringly to the jar in question. Opening it, he dipped the match into the contents, closed the jar carefully and turned. Looking over the assembled men, he walked carelessly toward Robert, swinging his arms in a manner that slightly exaggerated the natural arm swing of a person walking. As he passed Robert's chair, the swinging arm, holding the match, brushed as if by accident, the back of Robert's hand. The

boy's hand turned and it was seen that the end of the match scraped the young man's hand.

Harry kept on walking and the men who followed saw him drop the match into the furnace. Then he returned to his former place. Connors called Mrs. Petersen, to whom Professor Brierly said:

"Mrs. Petersen will you please take care of the boy and put him to bed. He has been through an unpleasant illness. He will be in good hands now. We will be up shortly."

"Professor, what was in that jar that he used on Robert?" asked Jimmy.

"Dr. Manx was doing some very valuable research work. That jar held a culture of hydrophobia germs.—*John, watch him!*"

Robert had sat quietly throughout the entire terrible ordeal. Beyond occasionally burying his head in his hands, he had not shown any greater emotion than any other member of the group. At the professor's statement about the contents of the jar, he turned pale with a dreadful pallor, then green. His arms dropped limply to his sides, his head began to roll, and he was falling out of his seat when Matthews reached him.

Matthews caught him. His great arms raised him, one of his hands grasped an ankle and with the other under Robert's shoulder, the inert body was held obliquely, permitting the head to drop lower than the body. After a minute of this the green gave way to pallor, then to a faint pink and finally the face became suffused with red. Robert's eyes blinked and he tried to lift his head. Meanwhile Matthews was murmuring:

"All right, folks, just a simple faint. See the blood coming back to his head; he'll come around all right. Enough to knock anybody out, poor devil."

As the young man showed increasing signs of life, Matthews upended him, dropped to one knee, sat Robert on his other knee and pillowed the young man's still swaying head on his shoulder. Then Matthews began crooning: "All right, old top, nothing's going to hurt you." He turned to the others. "A little brandy please, somebody." Someone handed him some amber-colored liquid and he forced a few drops between Robert's lips. He kept on crooning.

"All right, old chap. The man I took you to

gave you the Pasteur treatment—the man I took you to gave you the Pasteur treatment—the man I took you to gave you the Pasteur treatment." He repeated this over and over, until Robert showed signs that he understood. Then he carried him to the couch, still repeating the formula.

The young man looked up at Matthews and smiled weakly.

"Atta boy, have another swallow of this. Even Volstead would forgive you for it. Understand what I'm saying? The man I took you to gave you the Pasteur treatment." The figure on the couch nodded and smiled. Then Matthews grinned.

"You may die of old age, old horse, but you'll not die of hydrophobia."

THE END

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